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古谷実

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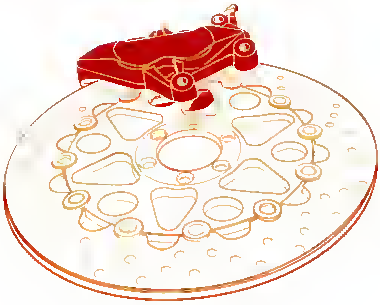

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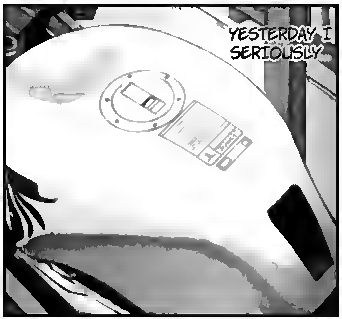
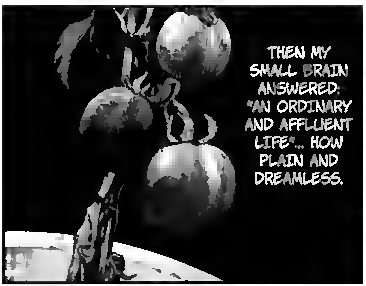
CHAPTER 47 - EMPTY

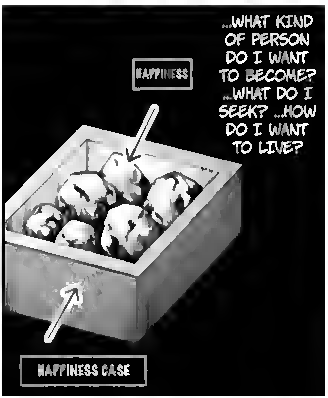
MY LAST SUMMER VACATION AS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IS DRAWING NEAR.
SOON...

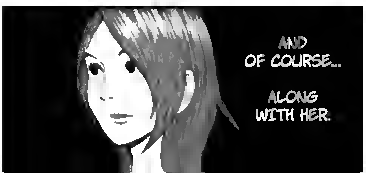
I SERIOUSLY THOUGHT
YESTERDAY I SERIOUSLY...
ABOUT MY FUTURE.

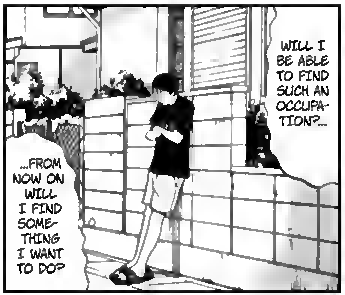

YESTERDAY I SERIOUSLY...

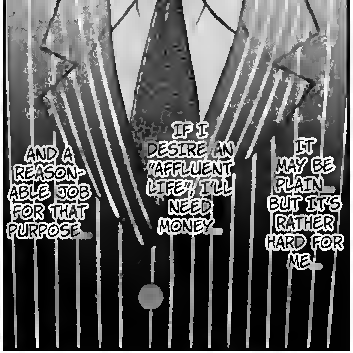
...FIRSTLY, I HAVE TO DECIDE CONCRETELY WHAT MY "HAPPINESS" IS..

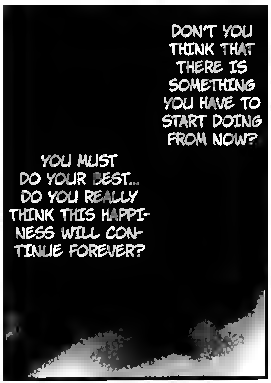

THEN MY SMALL BRAIN ANSWERED: "AN ORDINARY AND AFFLUENT LIFE"... HOW PLAIN AND DREAMLESS.


...WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO I WANT TO BECOME? ...WHAT DO I SEEK? ...HOW DO I WANT TO LIVE?
HAPPINESS
HAPPINESS CASE


AND OF COURSE...
ALONG WITH HER.


WILL I BE ABLE TO FIND SUCH AN OCCUPATION?...
...FROM NOW ON WILL I FIND SOMETHING I WANT TO DO?

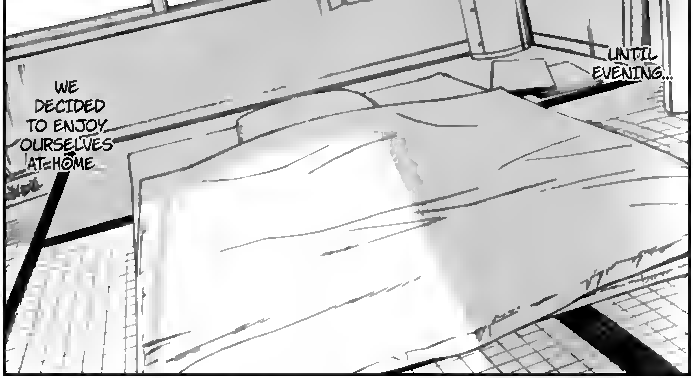

IT MAY BE PLAIN... BUT IT'S RATHER HARD FOR ME.
IF I DESIRE AN "AFFLUENT LIFE", I'LL NEED MONEY.
AND A REASONABLE JOB FOR THAT PURPOSE.


YOU MUST DO YOUR BEST... DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS HAPPINESS WILL CONTINUE FOREVER?
DON'T YOU THINK THAT THERE IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO START DOING FROM NOW?

WITH NO OBJECTIVE, JOINING A LOW-RANKED UNIVERSITY... WHAT COULD I DO THEN?

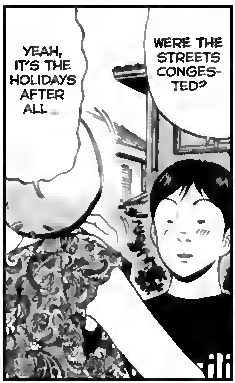
A CHANGE OF PLANS.
BUT THIS MORNING, MY FAMILY DECIDED TO LEAVE THE HOUSE.
I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO OUT ON A DATE WITH NAGUMO.
BY THE WAY, TODAY...

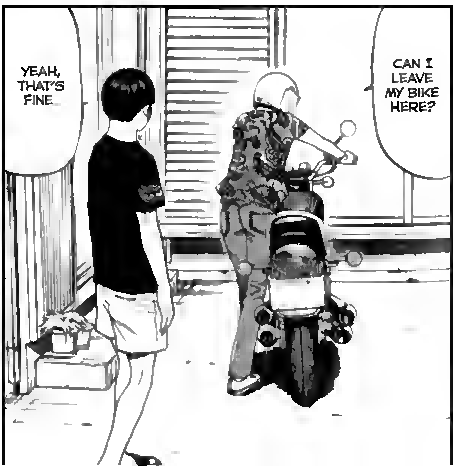
BY THE WAY..


WE DECIDED TO ENJOY OURSELVES AT HOME
UNTIL EVENING...

WHOA... MY HAPPI-NESS...
aprilia

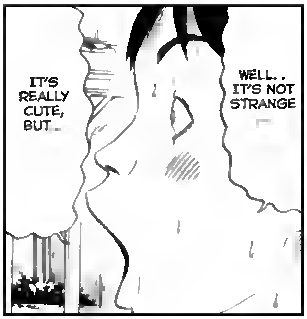
ドルル
OH, THERE SHE IS...


YEAH, IT'S THE HOLIDAYS AFTER ALL...
WERE THE STREETS CONGES-TED?

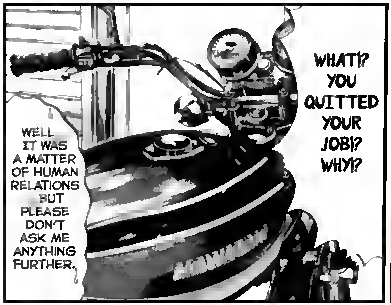

YEAH, THAT'S FINE...
CAN I LEAVE MY BIKE HERE?

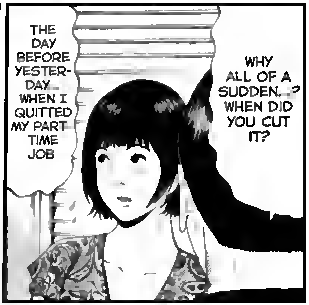
WHOA !!?

WHAT HAPPENED, NAGUMO!?
FUU... IT'S QUITE HOT TODAY...


IT'S REALLY CUTE, BUT...
WELL.. IT'S NOT STRANGE

I KNOW. DO YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE!? DON'T YOU LIKE IT!?
YOUR HAIR'S BECOME BLACK! AND IT'S SHORT!!


WELL IT WAS A MATTER OF HUMAN RELATIONS BUT PLEASE DON'T ASK ME ANYTHING FURTHER.
WHAT!? YOU QUITTED YOUR JOB!? WHY!?

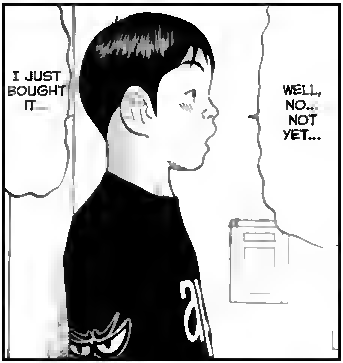

THE DAY BEFORE YESTER-DAY... WHEN I QUITTED MY PART TIME JOB
WHY ALL OF A SUDDEN...? WHEN DID YOU CUT IT?

I ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT IT'S NOT STRANGE AT ALL... YOUR MOM IS REALLY GOOD.
HOW IS IT? TELL ME SIN-CERELY... IS IT REALLY STRANGE?
IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE MY MOM LAST CUT MY HAIR, SO SHE MADE IT THE EXACT SAME HAIR-STYLE I HAD WHEN I WAS A CHILD.

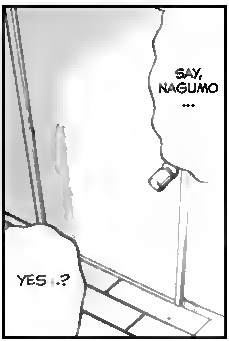
THE FUTON... IS ALREADY LAID DOWN...
WHA-
HUH?
SORRY.. I'LL PUT IT AWAY.
T-THAT'S RIGHT.. THIS IS NOT GOOD.
aprilia
BOOK: COLLEGE GUIDE
大学ガイド
OH, THIS BOOK...!
HUH?
IT'S OKAY.
NO...

WOW, ARE YOU ALREADY LOOKING AT COLLEGES?
I HAVE THIS BOOK TOO. . LAST YEAR'S EDITION...

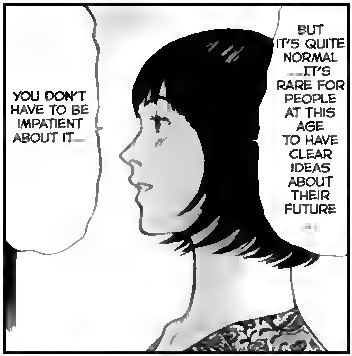
NOT AT ALL. . I'M JUST IDLING AWAY...
ARE YOU STUDYING FOR ENTRY EXAMS?


I JUST BOUGHT IT...
WELL, NO... NOT YET...

LET ME KNOW, PLEASE! IN A FEW YEARS, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE DOING? AND WHERE?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO AFTER UNIVERSITY? HAVE YOU ALREADY CHOSEN A FIRM YOU WANT TO WORK FOR?


SAY, NAGUMO ...
YES ..?

WHAT WILL I BE DOING ..?
HMMM... IN A FEW YEARS...


BUT IT'S QUITE NORMAL ...IT'S RARE FOR PEOPLE AT THIS AGE TO HAVE CLEAR IDEAS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE IMPATIENT ABOUT IT...

I DON'T KNOW... I DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA, WHICH MAKES ME FEEL SAD...
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT KIND OF JOB WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?

. BUT . EVEN IF I'M YOUNG I SHOULD BE OLD ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MY POSSI-BILITIES ARE...

HMMM.

I AM BECOMING AWARE OF WHAT I CAN AND CANNOT DO. . GRADUALLY, MY FUTURE SEEMS LIMITED...
...FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN IF I STUDY HARD, I DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO ENTER YOUR COLLEGE. .

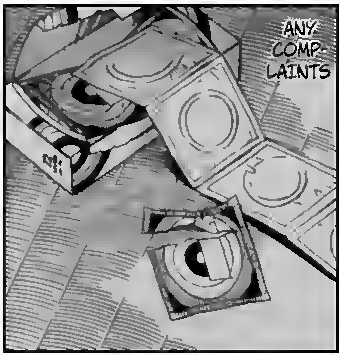
ONE MIGHT SAY THAT IT'S NOT TRUE BUT... I THINK IT CAN'T BE HELPED...
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE ANY ARTISTIC OR ATHLETIC TALENT ARE ORIENTED ACCORDING TO AN ACADEMIC BACKGROUND, RIGHT?

IF YOU SAY SOME-THING STUPID LIKE THAT, I'LL GET ANGRY!
DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU THINK I WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH A RICH ELITE MEMBER AND I'LL BREAK UP WITH YOU...?

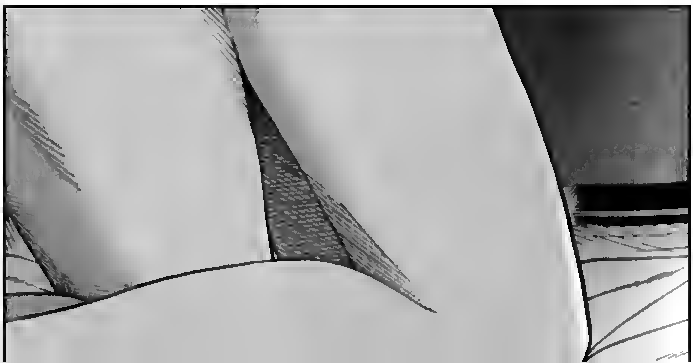
WAIT! STOP IT!
...MORE-OVER NAGUMO ...YOU'RE PART OF THE ELITE SOCIETY...
Aprilia

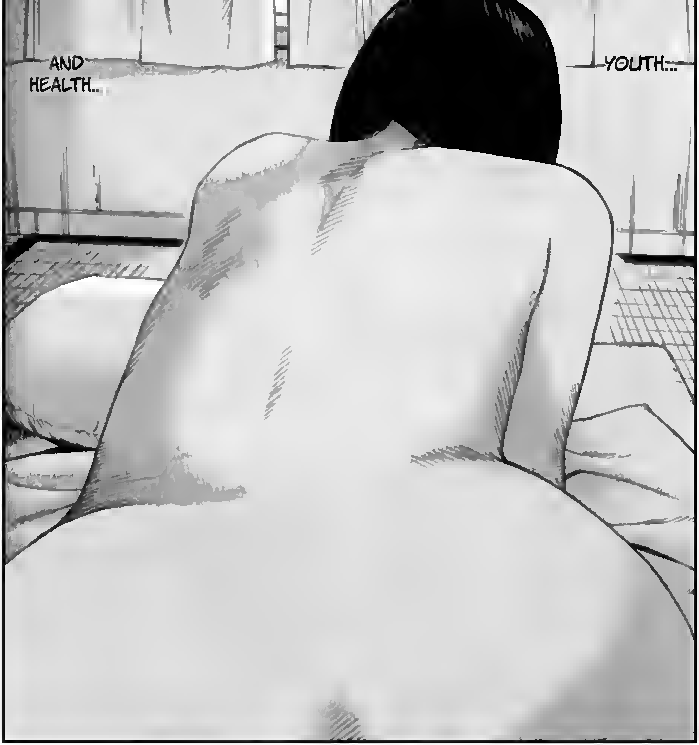
I DIDN'T DARE SAY BUT...
OGINO. WHEN YOU ASKED ME ABOUT MY FUTURE A LITTLE WHILE AGO...
.....
NO...
IS THIS BAD? DO YOU THINK I'M STRANGE?
I THINK I'LL BE MARRIED TO YOU AND I WAS THINKING ABOUT A HAPPY FUTURE.
MAYBE. NO... MOST LIKELY...
TAKE IT EASY, OTHERWISE IT WILL MAKE YOUR STOMACH ACHE.
ANYWAY, IT'S NO USE WORRYING ABOUT OUR FUTURE/ AND YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO PESSIMISTIC.
YEAH...
—YOU'RE RIGHT.
HOWEVER, THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENT AND A THIRD YEAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, DOES IT?

I AM HAPPY.
RIGHT NOW..


ANY COMP-LAINTS

I DON'T HAVE

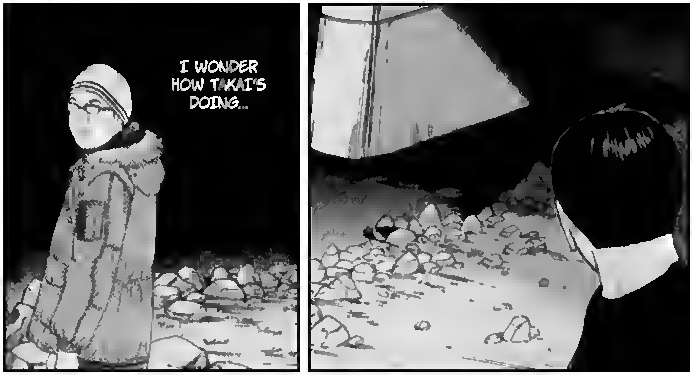




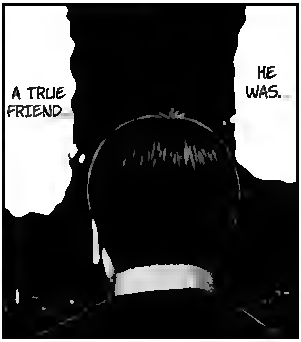
SPOILT WITH EVERYTHING...

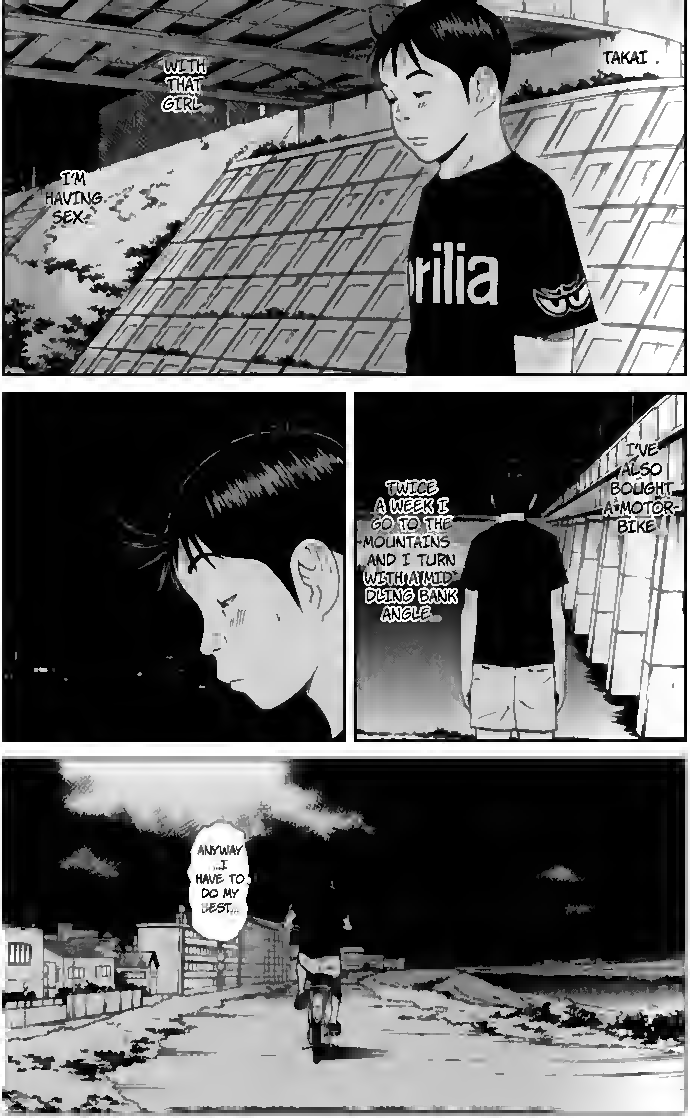
TODAY I HAD A LOT OF SEX

THAT TOMORROW, THE WORLD COULD PERISH.
SO MUCH SEX...

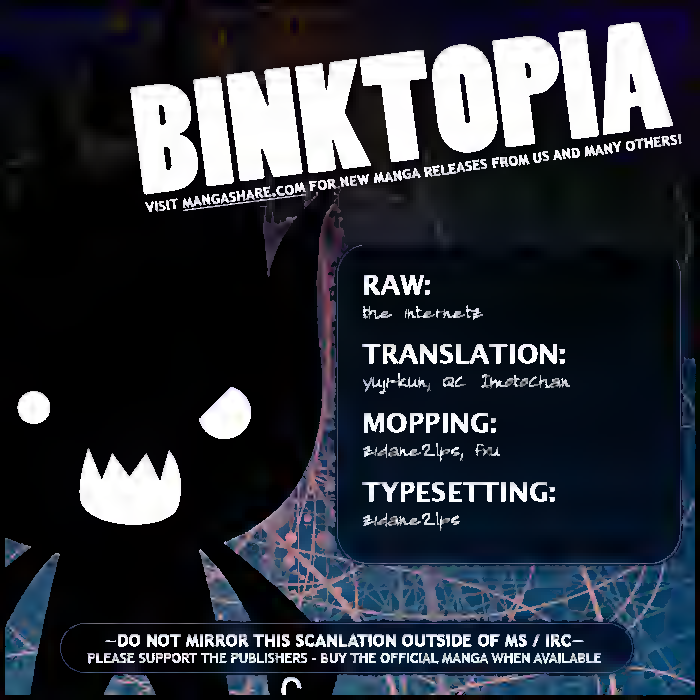

I WONDER HOW TAKAI'S DOING...

I CAN'T MAKE ANY FRIENDS WHO I CAN SINCERELY TALK TO :
BESIDES NAGUMO


A TRUE FRIEND
HE WAS.


TAKAI .
WITH THAT GIRL
I'M HAVING SEX.
rilia
I'VE ALSO BOUGHT A MOTOR-BIKE
TWICE A WEEK I GO TO THE MOUNTAINS AND I TURN WITH A MID DLING BANK ANGLE
ANYWAY ...I HAVE TO DO MY BEST...

BINKTOPIA
VISIT MANGASHARE.COM FOR NEW MANGA RELEASES FROM US AND MANY OTHERS!



RAW:
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TRANSLATION:
yuyi-kun, QC Imotochan

MOPPING:
Zidane24ps, Fru

TYPESETTING:
Zidane24ps

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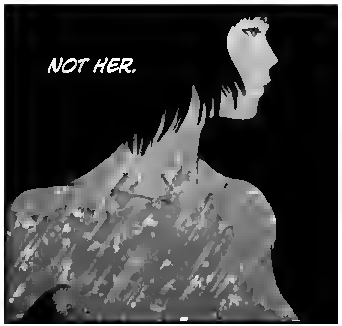
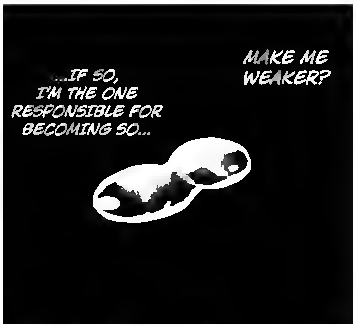
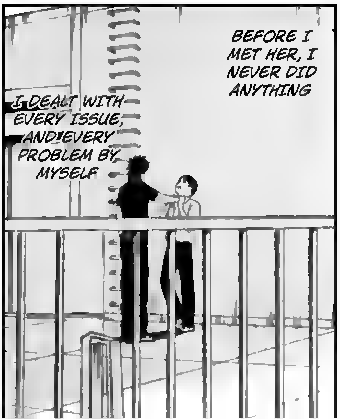
CHAPTER 48 - AIM

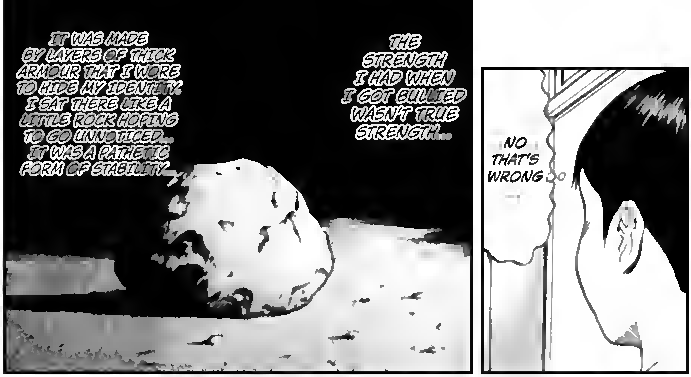
MY GIRLFRIEND...
DOES THE EXISTENCE OF NAGUMO,

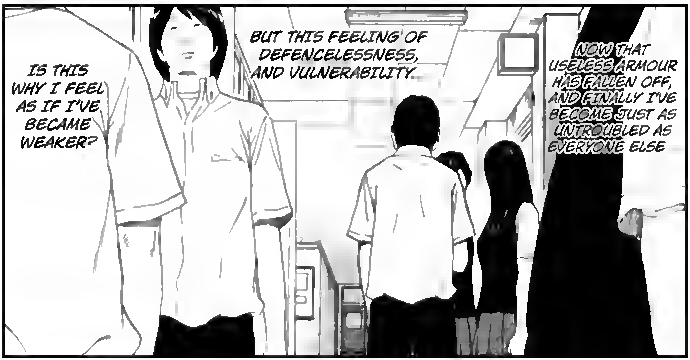

NOT HER.

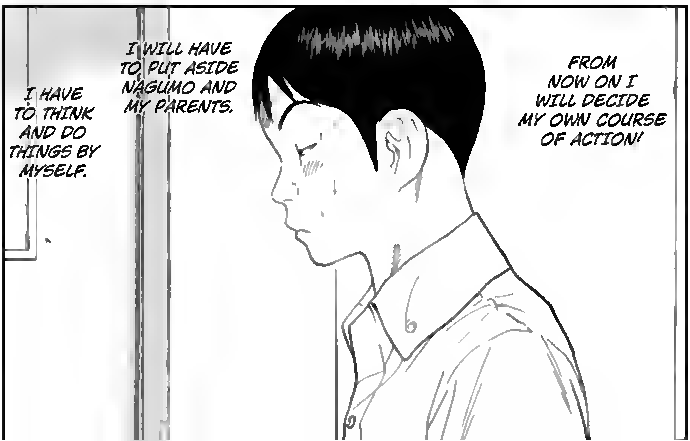

...IF SO, I'M THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR BECOMING SO...
MAKE ME WEAKER?

I DEPEND ON HER, AND SOMETIMES I WOULD DECEIVE MYSELF FOR HER. SHE IS ALL I THINK ABOUT. MY LIFE IS COMPLETELY OFF BALANCE.
BUT NOW..


I DEALT WITH EVERY ISSUE, AND EVERY PROBLEM BY MYSELF.
BEFORE I MET HER, I NEVER DID ANYTHING

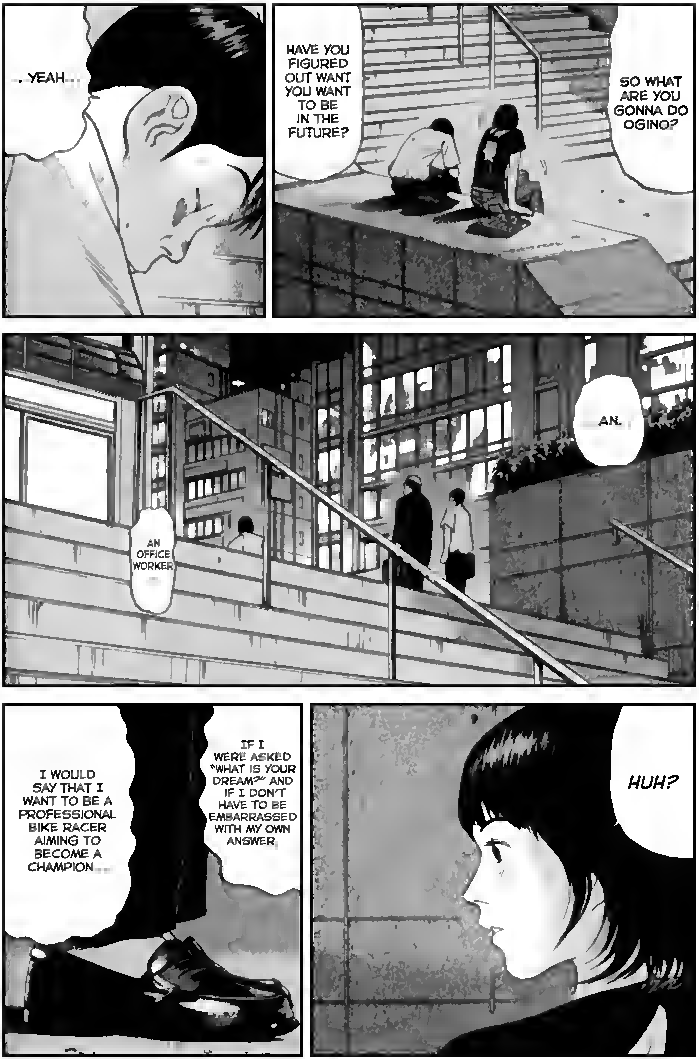

IT WAS MADE BY LAYERS OF THICK ARMOUR THAT I WORE TO HIDE MY IDENTITY. I SAT THERE LIKE A LITTLE ROCK HOPING TO GO UNNOTICED... IT WAS A PATHETIC FORM OF STEALTH.
THE STRENGTH I HAD WHEN I GOT BULLIED WASN'T TRUE STRENGTH...
NO THAT'S WRONG...

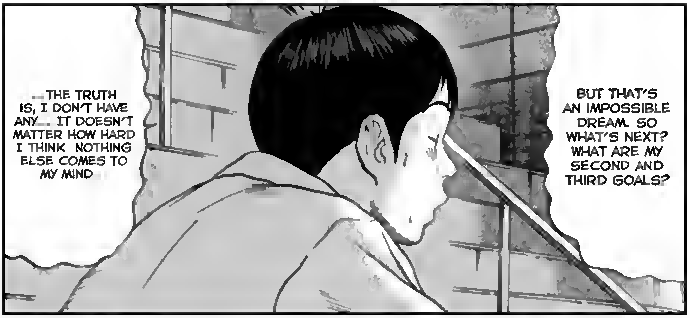

IS THIS WHY I FEEL AS IF I'VE BECAME WEAKER?
BUT THIS FEELING OF DEFENCELESSNESS, AND VULNERABILITY...
NOW THAT USELESS ARMOUR HAS FALLEN OFF, AND FINALLY I'VE BECOME JUST AS UNTROUBLED AS EVERYONE ELSE

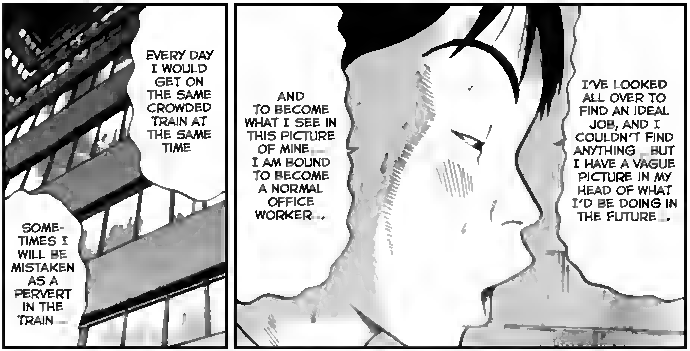

I HAVE TO THINK AND DO THINGS BY MYSELF.
I WILL HAVE TO PUT ASIDE NAGUMO AND MY PARENTS.
FROM NOW ON I WILL DECIDE MY OWN COURSE OF ACTION!

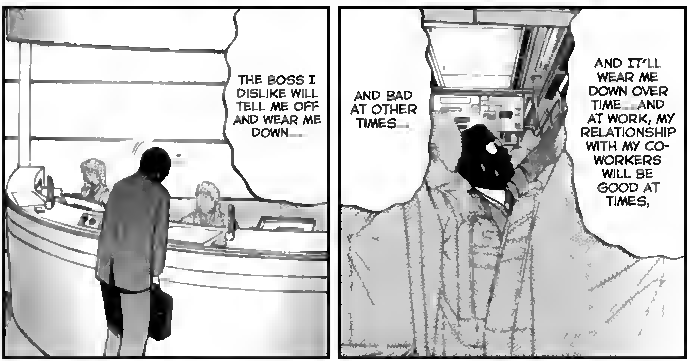
OOTA'S PARENTS OWN A FLOWER SHOP, AND AFTER HE GRADUATES HE'S PLANNING ON HELPING THEM OUT
MITSUHASHI WANTS TO BE A HAIR STYLIST IN THE FUTURE, AND SHE IS GOING TO ATTEND A STYLIST'S SCHOOL.
THEY'VE DECIDED...
TAKEI SAITO "I DON'T WANT TO COMMIT TO ANYTHING YET" AND STILL HE'S GOING TO SOME BUSINESS SCHOOL.
WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?
WHAT ABOUT ME?
WHAT AM I INTERESTED IN?
EVEN THE ONES WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE...
I ONLY ASKED A FEW PEOPLE, AND THEY HAVE ALL DECIDED...

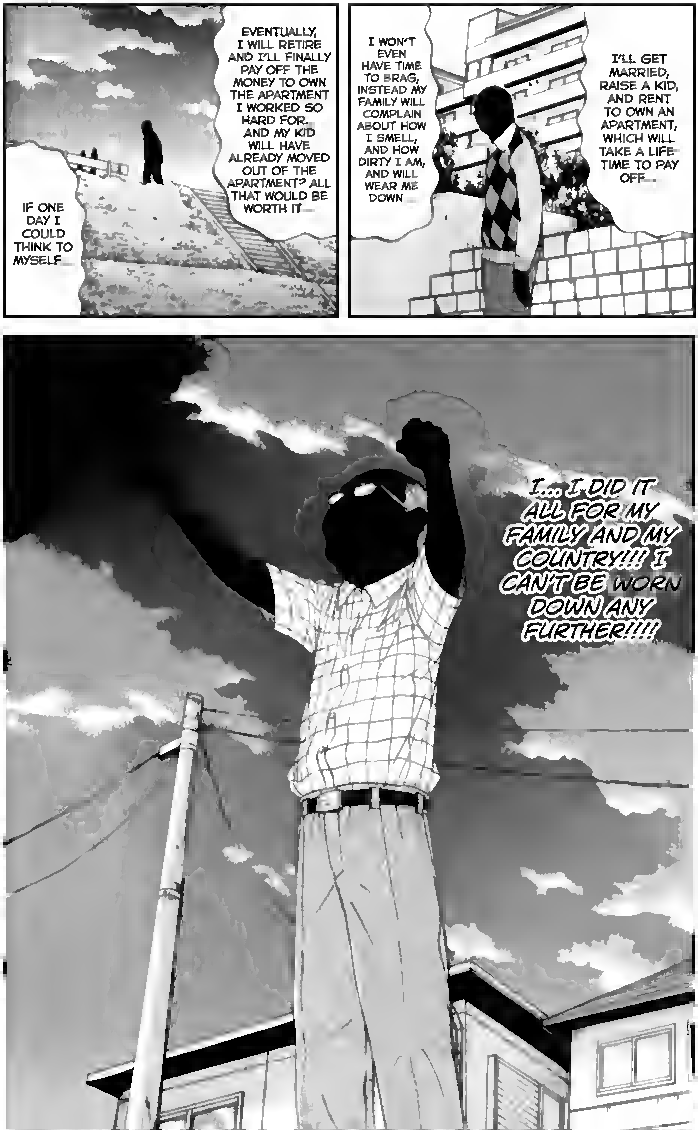
THEY'VE THOUGHT OUT WHAT THEY WANT TO DO IN THE FUTURE EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE ONLY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.
WOW, THAT'S GREAT FOR THEM!


...YEAH...
HAVE YOU FIGURED OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE?
SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO OGINO?
AN...
AN OFFICE WORKER...
I WOULD SAY THAT I WANT TO BE A PROFESSIONAL BIKE RACER AIMING TO BECOME A CHAMPION...
IF I WERE ASKED "WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?" AND IF I DON'T HAVE TO BE EMBARRASSED WITH MY OWN ANSWER.
HUH?


...THE TRUTH IS, I DON'T HAVE ANY... IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW HARD I THINK NOTHING ELSE COMES TO MY MIND
BUT THAT'S AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM. SO WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT ARE MY SECOND AND THIRD GOALS?


EVERY DAY I WOULD GET ON THE SAME CROWDED TRAIN AT THE SAME TIME
SOME-TIMES I WILL BE MISTAKEN AS A PERVERT IN THE TRAIN...
AND TO BECOME WHAT I SEE IN THIS PICTURE OF MINE... I AM BOUND TO BECOME A NORMAL OFFICE WORKER...
I'VE LOOKED ALL OVER TO FIND AN IDEAL JOB, AND I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING... BUT I HAVE A VAGUE PICTURE IN MY HEAD OF WHAT I'D BE DOING IN THE FUTURE...


THE BOSS I DISLIKE WILL TELL ME OFF AND WEAR ME DOWN...
AND BAD AT OTHER TIMES...
AND IT'LL WEAR ME DOWN OVER TIME...AND AT WORK, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CO-WORKERS WILL BE GOOD AT TIMES,


IF ONE DAY I COULD THINK TO MYSELF...
EVENTUALLY, I WILL RETIRE AND I'LL FINALLY PAY OFF THE MONEY TO OWN THE APARTMENT I WORKED SO HARD FOR. AND MY KID WILL HAVE ALREADY MOVED OUT OF THE APARTMENT? ALL THAT WOULD BE WORTH IT...
I WON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO BRAG, INSTEAD MY FAMILY WILL COMPLAIN ABOUT HOW I SMELL, AND HOW DIRTY I AM, AND WILL WEAR ME DOWN...
I'LL GET MARRIED, RAISE A KID, AND RENT TO OWN AN APARTMENT, WHICH WILL TAKE A LIFE-TIME TO PAY OFF...
I... I DID IT ALL FOR MY FAMILY AND MY COUNTRY!!! I CAN'T BE WORN DOWN ANY FURTHER!!!!

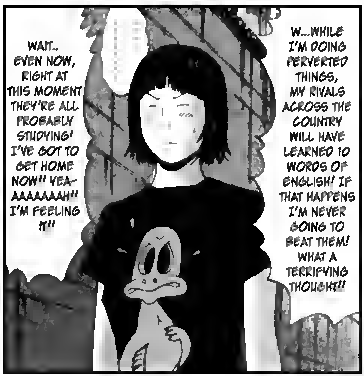
I REALLY MEAN THAT...
AM I WEIRD?
...AND THAT'S THE TYPE OF OFFICE WORKER I WANT TO BE.
I HAVE TO GET INTO A SCHOOL THAT'S A BIT ABOVE MY LEVEL...
...THE ONLY PROBLEM IS... TO BE AN OFFICE WORKER THAT CAN AFFORD TO OWN AN APARTMENT AND A NICE SUITE...
I REALLY THINK ITS GREAT!
NO WAY! THAT'S A GREAT DREAM!
O... OKAY.. I'LL TRY..
YOU CAN DO IT OGINO!!
DON'T WORRY! IF YOU STUDY BIT BY BIT, EVERY DAY FROM NOW ON, YOU'LL GET IN FOR SURE!
I HAVE TO STUDY EXTRA HARD FOR THE ENTRANCE EXAMS.
WHICH MEANS... I HAVE TO MAKE UP FOR THE TIME I'VE BEEN SLACK ING..

YEAAAAAAH!! I'M GONNA DO THIS! I'M GOING TO STUDY WAY HARD THIS SUMMER!! EVERY-THING DEPENDS ON IT!
WOW!! WOOOOW! I'VE JUST DECIDED!! I'VE JUST DECIDED WHAT I WANT TO DO IN THE FUTURE PRETTY MUCH BY MYSELF!!
TRY TO THINK AS IF I DON'T EXIST!!
OH YEAH NAGUMO, I'M REALLY SORRY BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO HANG OUT WITH YOU THIS SUMMER, I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND
LETS GO TOMORROW, THE BOOKS STORES ARE CLOSED
NAGUMO, LETS GO GET THE STUDY GUIDE TEXTBOOKS RIGHT NOW!!
NO, ABSOLUTELY NOT! IF YOU COME, WE'LL START DOING "OTHER THINGS". I'M GOING TO DO THIS BY MYSELF!!
WHY CAN'T WE JUST STUDY TOGETHER? I PROMISE I WON'T BOTHER YOU.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WHAAAAT"? DIDN'T YOU HEAR ANYTHING I SAID? PLEASE UNDERSTAND, JUST FOR THIS YEAR!!
WHAAAAAAAAT!?

NO NO, THAT'S IM-POSSIBLE! I WON'T BE ABLE TO THINK STRAIGHT!
I DON'T HAVE THE CONFI-DENCE!

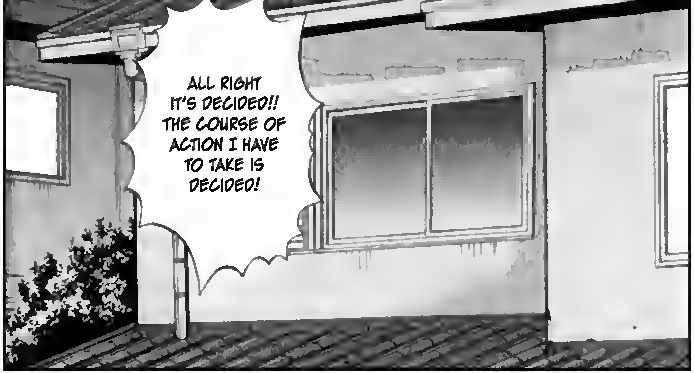
JUST SET YOUR MIND STRAIGHT!
WE DON'T NEED TO DO ANY-THING LIKE THAT!!

CAN YOU SAY "YOU CAN DO IT" AGAIN FOR ME?

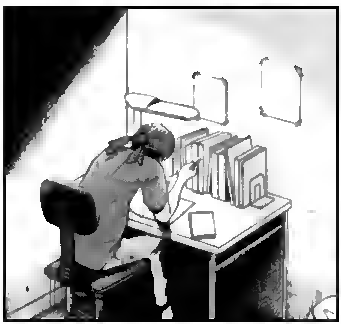

WAIT.. EVEN NOW, RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT THEY'RE ALL PROBABLY STUDYING! I'VE GOT TO GET HOME NOW!! YEA-AAAAAAAH!! I'M FEELING IT!!
W...WHILE I'M DOING PERVERTED THINGS, MY RIVALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WILL HAVE LEARNED 10 WORDS OF ENGLISH! IF THAT HAPPENS I'M NEVER GOING TO BEAT THEM! WHAT A TERRIFYING THOUGHT!!

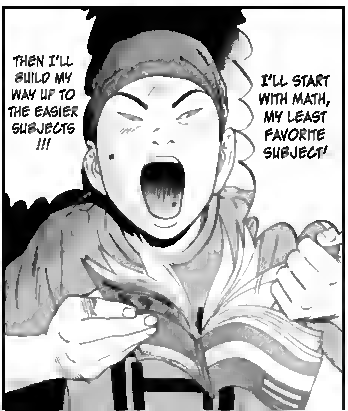
DON'T SAY THAT!! IT HURTS ME EVERY TIME YOU SAY THAT!!
WHAAA AAAAAT ~~~~~~~!?

OKAY!! I'LL DO IT!!
YOU CAN DO IT OGINO!


ALL RIGHT IT'S DECIDED!! THE COURSE OF ACTION I HAVE TO TAKE IS DECIDED!

BUT NOW THAT I HAVE A GOAL, I FEEL STRONGER AND MORE MOTIVATED TO STRIVE TOWARDS IT!!!
BEFORE I FOUND MY GOAL, I WAS WEAKER THAN THE PEOPLE AROUND ME




THEN I'LL BUILD MY WAY UP TO THE EASIER SUBJECTS !!!
I'LL START WITH MATH, MY LEAST FAVORITE SUBJECT!

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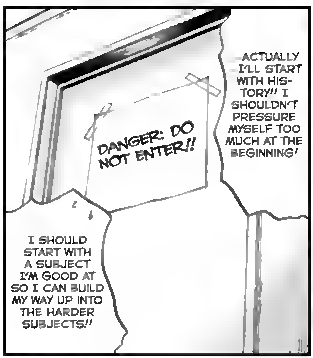
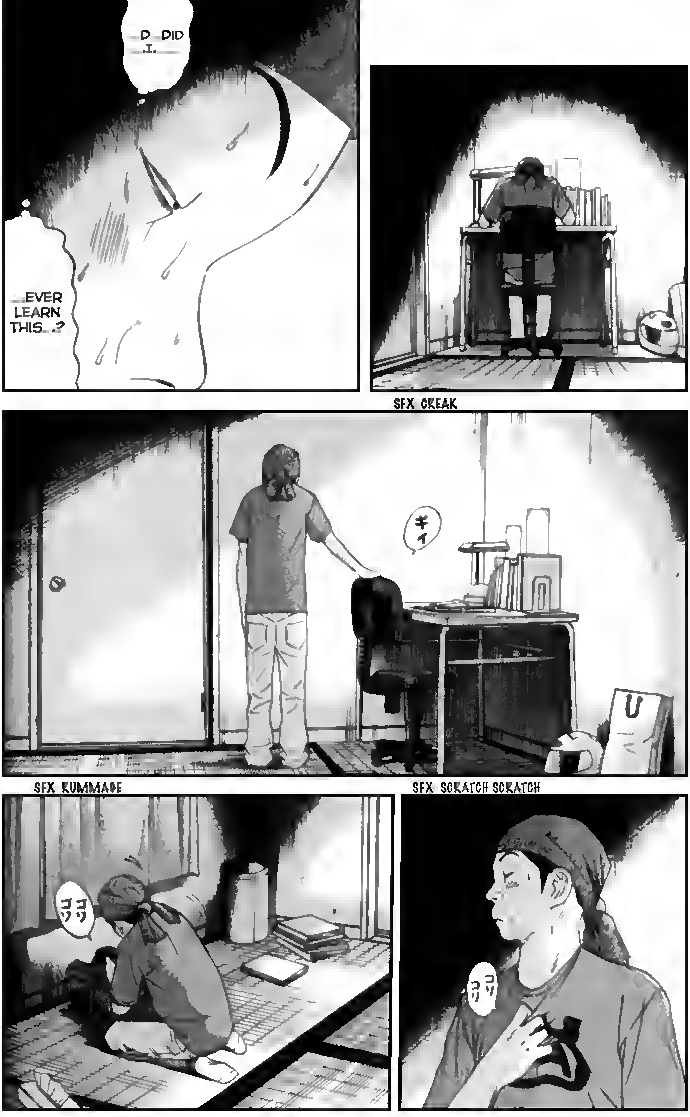
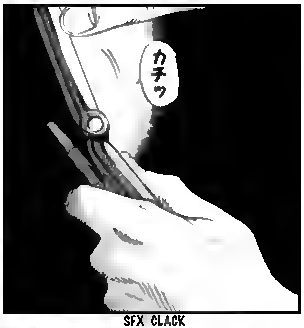

DANGER: DO NOT ENTER!!
I SHOULD START WITH A SUBJECT I'M GOOD AT SO I CAN BUILD MY WAY UP INTO THE HARDER SUBJECTS!!
...ACTUALLY I'LL START WITH HISTORY!! I SHOULDN'T PRESSURE MYSELF TOO MUCH AT THE BEGINNING!

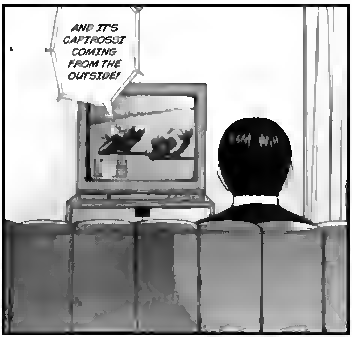
I DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND WHAT THE QUESTION IS ASKING FOR...
...I, I CAN'T DO THIS...


D...DID I...
...EVER LEARN THIS...?
SFX CREAK
キィ
SFX RUMMAGE
ゴソゴソ
SFX SCRATCH SCRATCH
カリカリ



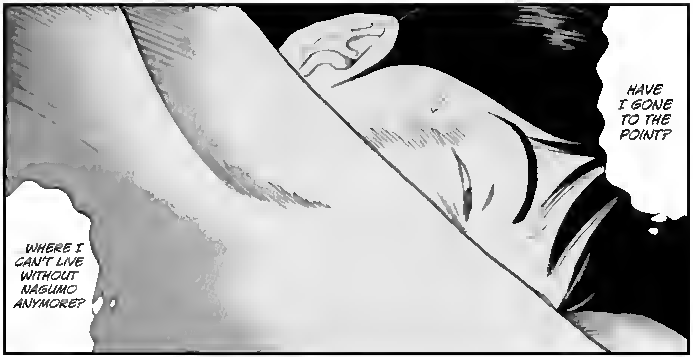
SFX CLACK

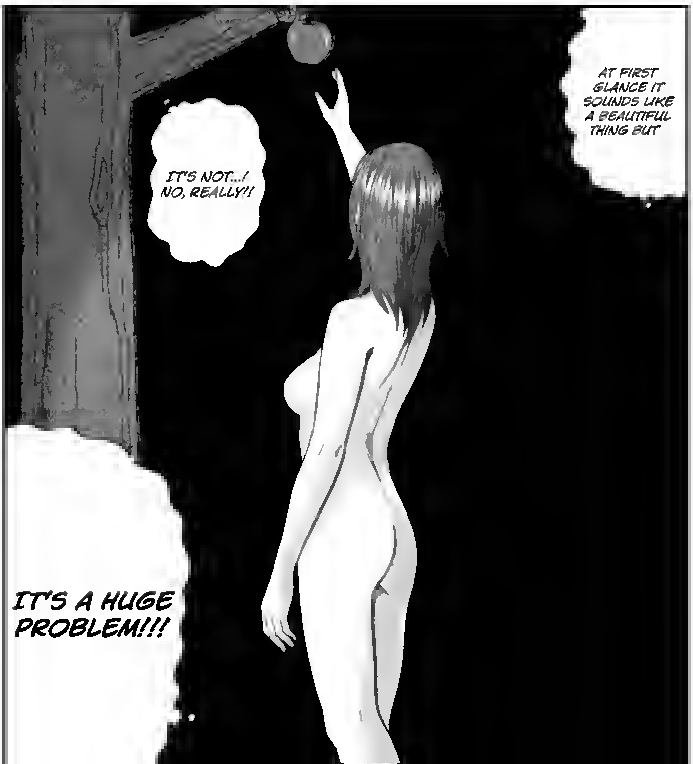
SFX CLICK CLICK CLICK

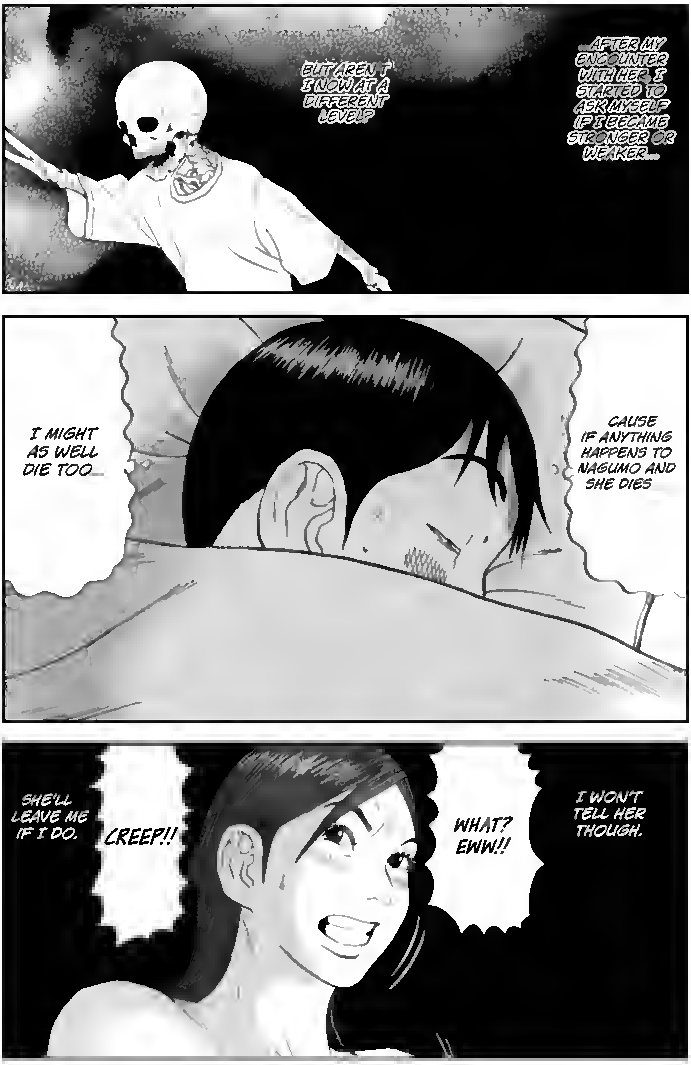

AND IT'S CARTRIDGE COMING FROM THE OUTSIDE!

... SORRY ...DID I WAKE YOU UP?
UM... HELLO...? NAGUMO?

...CAN YOU HELP ME STUDY...?
UMM? I'M ACTUALLY GONNA NEED SOME HELP...
DON'T DISLIKE ME FOR IT...
JUST TO LET YOU KNOW, I'M NOT THE BRIGHTEST K'D OUT THERE.
I HATE SO MUCH MY INCOMPETENCE...
A SUDDEN RUSH OF COLDNESS WENT THROUGH MY BODY...


HAVE I GONE TO THE POINT?
WHERE I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT NAGUMO ANYMORE?


AT FIRST GLANCE IT SOUNDS LIKE A BEAUTIFUL THING BUT
IT'S NOT...! NO, REALLY?!
IT'S A HUGE PROBLEM!!!


...AFTER MY ENCOUNTER WITH HER, I STARTED TO ASK MYSELF IF I BECAME STRONGER OR WEAKER....
BUT AREN'T I NOW AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL?
CAUSE IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO NAGUMO AND SHE DIES
I MIGHT AS WELL DIE TOO...
I WON'T TELL HER THOUGH.
WHAT? EWW!!
CREEP!!
SHE'LL LEAVE ME IF I DO.

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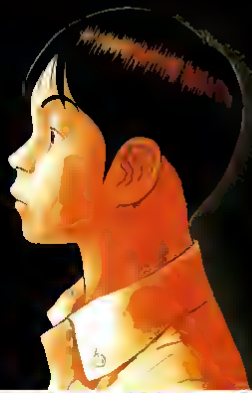

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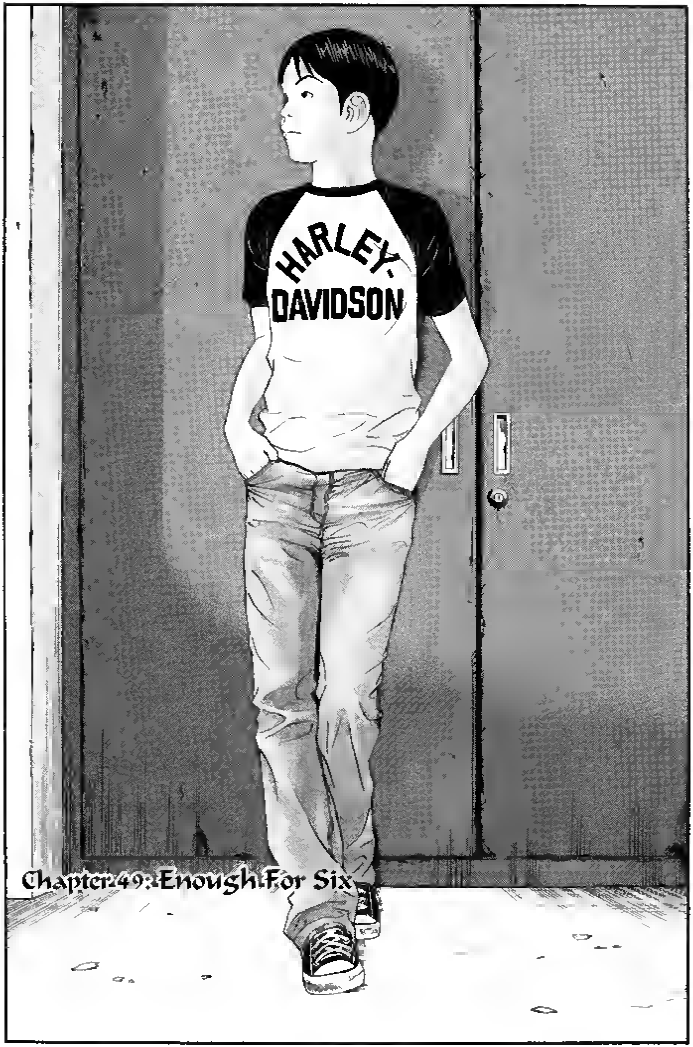


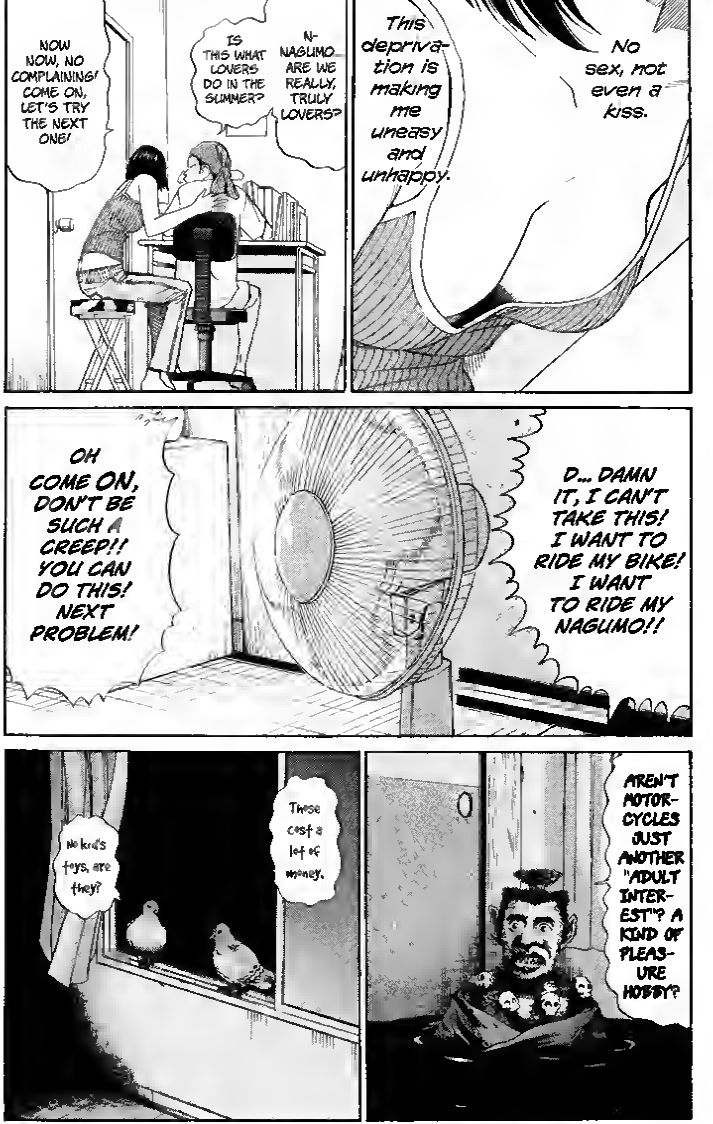
Chapter 49: Enough For Six

The last summer vacation of my high school life started last week.

AAARGH, I WANT TO GET OUTSIDE!! I WANT TO RIDE INTO THE HILLS!! I WANT TO SPEND THE ENTIRE DAY HANGING AROUND WITH NAGUMOOOOOOO !!
...get an incredible urge that goes...

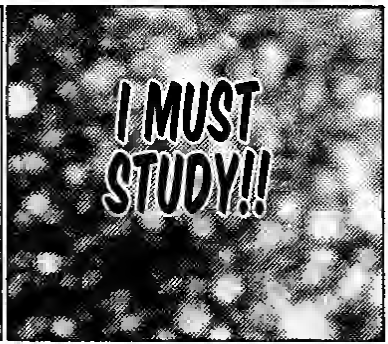
It's literally been work and studying all day, every day...
but all of that is forbidden to me this year.
...every time I look out the window,

Even when I do see her, it's just for her to help me study...
Nagumo's been working like mad, too, to save up for living alone...
Yes, that's right! My Aprilia loan!
I honestly wish I could spend all the time studying, but I owe my parents money.


No sex, not even a kiss.
This deprivation is making me uneasy and unhappy.
N-NAGUMO... ARE WE REALLY, TRULY LOVERS?
IS THIS WHAT LOVERS DO IN THE SUMMER?
NOW NOW, NO COMPLAINING! COME ON, LET'S TRY THE NEXT ONE!
D... DAMN IT, I CAN'T TAKE THIS! I WANT TO RIDE MY BIKE! I WANT TO RIDE MY NAGUMO!!
OH COME ON, DON'T BE SUCH A CREEP!! YOU CAN DO THIS! NEXT PROBLEM!
AREN'T MOTORCYCLES JUST ANOTHER "ADULT INTEREST"? A KIND OF PLEASURE HOBBY?
These cost a lot of money.
No kid's toys, are they?

Night-mares...
Endless night-mares...
MR. B, WITH THE SAME GRADES, STUDIES EVERY WAKING HOUR OF THE DAY. WHICH ONE'S GOING TO PASS?
B... MR. B...
MR. A RIDES HIS ITALIAN BIKE AROUND, WORKS A PART-TIME JOB AND LOVES HUMPING...

SO I NEED TO STUDY 2-3 TIMES AS HARD !!
I NEED TO STUDY AS HARD AS EVERYONE ELSE... NO! I'M TWICE AS STUPID AS ANY-ONE,


I MUST STUDY!!

HEY THERE! OGINO!

I ALSO HAVE TO WORK 2-3 TIMES AS HARD AT MY JOB!
AND SUDDENLY THE REST OF THE PART-TIMERS QUIT, AND THE BOSS'S 'RHOIDS RESUR-FACED!

YES?
COME OVER HERE FOR A MINUTE
THIS IS KOSHI, OUR NEWEST WORKER HE'LL BE WORKING DURING YOUR SHIFTS
KOSHI
I'M SORRY, OSINO.. I CAN'T HANDLE THIS ANY-MORE..
MY ASS IS SCREAM-ING AT ME, JUST STAND-ING UP
KOSHI USED TO WORK AT ONE OF OUR AFFILIATES, SO HE KNOWS HOW TO USE A REGISTER
WOULD YOU MIND HOLDING DOWN THE FORT HERE WITH HIM?
KOSHI

UNDERSTOOD, SIR!
OOOH
I'LL BE GOING BACK HOME, THEN CALL ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS
UM, YEAH... NO PROBLEM...
THANK GOD... REINFORCEMENTS.
UH... I'M OGINO HI...
UM, HI... I'M KOSHI
IT'S ACTUALLY THE HOUSE RIGHT BEHIND THE LOT..
HUH? YEAH... REAL CLOSE..
...IS HIS HOUSE RIGHT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

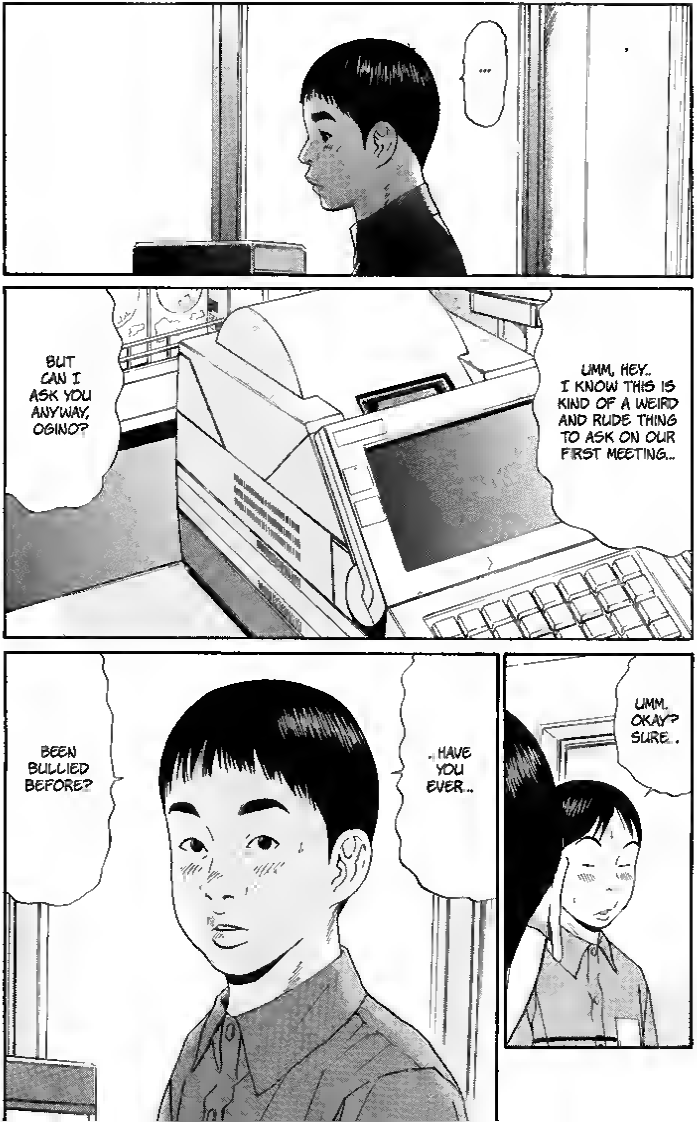
I wonder... if he thinks the same way?
KOSHI
Hmmm...
OGIHARA

I can sense it... I can SMELL it.
The kind of aura only a kindred soul can feel.
I think we're cut from the same cloth...
Koshi seems very similar to me...

HUH?
...MAN... THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO COME HERE ARE ALL, LIKE, SO ATHLETIC...
OH, YEAH THERE'S A REALLY BIG ATHLETICS SCHOOL NEARBY
IT'S PRETTY WILD, THEY'RE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY
OGINO
...SO IS OUR PEAK HOUR WHEN THEY LEAVE FOR HOME, AND THE REST IS PRETTY LAID BACK?
NO, THERE'S ANOTHER COMPANY AROUND HERE... THE EMPLOYEES STOP BY, TOO...
...I SEE...
...IS THAT YOUR MOTORCYCLE PARKED OUT THERE, OGINO?
HMM? YEAH, THAT'S MINE...
KOSHI

WOW.. MY LITTLE BROTHER HAS ONE, TOO... IS IT THAT FUN?
I MEAN, I GUESS THEY MUST BE, OR ELSE NOBODY WOULD RIDE THEM.
IF SOMEONE TOLD ME, "RIDE AMONG CARS IN TRAFFIC WITH THIS UNSTEADY, TWO-WHEELED VEHICLE THAT YOU HAVE TO LEAN AROUND TO TURN"..
IT WOULD BE PUNISH-MENT FOR ANYONE WHO DIDN'T DIG IT
RIGHT GOOD POINT BUT IT REALLY IS FUN
YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL TOO, RIGHT? WHAT YEAR?
THIRD YEAR I'VE GOT EXAMS NEXT YEAR
OH, YEAH... ME TOO..
SUCKS, HUH?
IS IT A SCHOOL AROUND HERE? WHICH ONE?
T HIGH I DIDN'T WANT TO WORK TOO CLOSE TO SCHOOL

I'M NOT THAT SMART... HELL, I'M ALMOST LAST IN THE YEAR...
ARE YOU KIDDING?! IF YOU'RE DUMB, THEN I MUST NOT HAVE ANY BRAINS IN MY HEAD AT ALL!!
THAT SUPER-SUPER-SMART SCHOOL?!!
WHAT?! T HIGH?! YOU GO TO T HIGH?!!
LATELY I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT BEING ABLE TO STUDY...
DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH INTELLI-GENCE...
A SUPER-DUPER ELITE, EVEN HIGHER ON THE CHAIN THAN NAGUMO!!
OH JESUS! KINDRED SOULS MY ASS! HE'S A TOTAL ELITE!!
I MEAN, SOMETIMES THE MOST BRILLIANT PEOPLE TOTALLY FALL IN WITH CULTS AND BECOME MURDERERS, YOU KNOW...
STUDYING'S REALLY ONLY JUST A SMALL PART OF HUMAN ABILITIES...
SAME WITH MOTORCYCLES, RIGHT? IT WON'T MATTER HOW NICE AN ENGINE YOU HAVE IF YOUR TIRES AND STUFF ARE CRAPPY, RIGHT?
HUH? OH... UMM, YEAH?


...
UMM, HEY. I KNOW THIS IS KIND OF A WEIRD AND RUDE THING TO ASK ON OUR FIRST MEETING...
BUT CAN I ASK YOU ANYWAY, OGINO?
UMM. OKAY? SURE..
..HAVE YOU EVER..
BEEN BULLIED BEFORE?

OH... I WAS JUST THINKING... YOU REMIND ME OF MYSELF...
W-WHY? HOW COULD YOU TELL?
YES...
...I HAVE...
BUT IT'S... OVER NOW...
NO.. UP UNTIL RECENTLY...
...DOES IT STILL HAPPEN, OGINO?
IT HAPPENED TO ME, TOO.. ALL THROUGH MIDDLE SCHOOL..
THAT'S HOW GREAT THINGS ARE NOW! I'M IN THE GREATEST TIME OF MY LIFE!!
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT, KOSHI? I'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN THAT PAST! NO REALLY, I CAN'T REMEMBER IT!
WAS IT HARD?
YEAH. IT SUCKED.

We ARE "kindred," in a way..
But inside...
We've got a big difference in brains...

Like, what if you went back in time and found yourself riding on the Titanic? What would you do?
HOW DO YOU SAY ICEBERG IN ENGLISH?
WE SHOULD LOOK FOR ANOTHER JAPANESE.

He's good at coming up with silly topics to talk about...
Koshi is a good conversationalist.

Or, would you tell an American pop superstar not to pursue his second plastic surgery?
POW!
NDAH!
SHOULD WE TELL HIM?
NO, I THINK HE'D BE HAPPIER GOING CRAZY

Or, if you were at Honnoji the night before Nobunaga is killed, would you help him survive?
WOULDN'T THAT MAKE JAPAN... TURN OUT REALLY WEIRD?
MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T...

We had such a good time, we even stopped at a nearby park to talk, rather than go home after work.

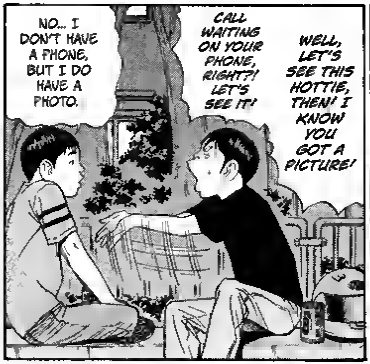
THERE'S NO USE TO DOING SOMETHING WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO.
SOMETIMES, YOU NEED TO.. MAN, IT JUST KILLS ME!

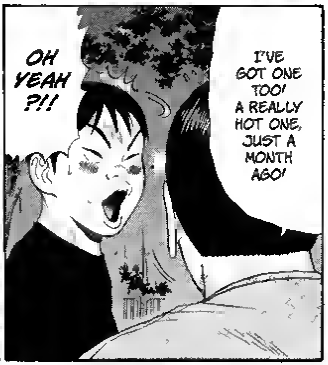
WASTING OUR TIME WITH STUPID CHATTING IN THE PARK, WITH TESTS COMING UP!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, KOSHI?! SHOULD WE EVEN BE DOING THIS?!

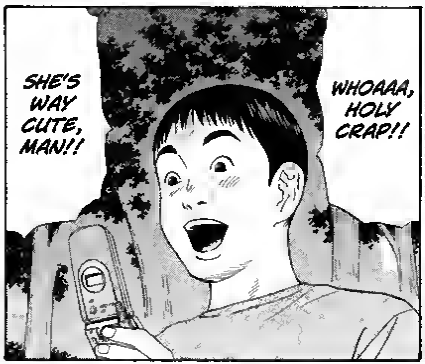
BUT, UH.. I GET MY GIRL-FRIEND TO HELP ME WHEN I DON'T UNDER-STAND
HMMM, YEAH, I'M JUST LIKE THAT MYSELF, BUT.

WE SHOULD STUDY TOGETHER! IT'S SO BORING DOING IT BY MYSELF.
HEY, I KNOW THAT FEELING! EVEN I UNDER-STAND THAT, DUMB AS I AM!

OH WOW, REALLY?! YOU HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND ?!
YEAH, I SURE DO! I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SCORE HIGH ON TESTS, BUT I GUESS I'VE WON THIS BATTLE, AT LEAST!!
IGNITION 45


NO... I DON'T HAVE A PHONE, BUT I DO HAVE A PHOTO.
CALL WAITING ON YOUR PHONE, RIGHT?! LET'S SEE IT!
WELL, LET'S SEE THIS HOTTIE, THEN! I KNOW YOU GOT A PICTURE!


OH YEAH ?!!
I'VE GOT ONE TOO! A REALLY HOT ONE, JUST A MONTH AGO!


SHE'S WAY CUTE, MAN!!
WHOAAA, HOLY CRAP!!

YEAH, SURE THING! BUT DON'T YOU DARE PRESS THE "NEXT" BUTTON, OKAY?!
WILL YOU SHOW ME YOUR GIRLFRIEND, TOO, THEN?

URGH !!!
GRR...
GRRRRRR.
KOSHI... I'M GOING TO BE HONEST I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT TO YOU ANYMORE
WHICH KIND ARE YOU? YOU GOTTA BE HONEST WITH ME.
WHICH KIND? OF WHAT?
SIGHHHH... I'M THINKING OF BREAKING UP WITH HER, THOUGH...
WHOA!! WHY?! AFTER JUST ONE MONTH ?!!
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?! CAN SHE SEE DEAD PEOPLE?! DID SHE FORCE YOU TO EAT POOP ?!!
UMM, NO... NOTHING LIKE THAT
THEN WHAT ?!!

IT'S JUST... ALL OF A SUDDEN, ONE DAY SHE ASKED ME OUT, AND I BASICALLY BECAME HER BOYFRIEND THE NEXT DAY, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHY..
WELL, THERE'S NO REAL PROBLEM WITH HER... SHE'S A WONDERFUL PERSON, TOTALLY PERFECT...
BUT YOU'VE GOT YOUR REASONS! I'LL ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND!
I.. I THINK THAT IF MOST GUYS HEARD YOU THEY WOULD BEAT YOU TO A PULP FOR BEING SOOOO SPOILED
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND... SOMETIMES I'M LIKE, WHY AM I WALKING WITH THIS PERSON?
SO IT'S LIKE I DON'T THINK THAT I REALLY LOVED HER, IS THE THING...
LOVE?! LOVE DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE IT! NO JOKING, I SERIOUSLY COULD NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT HER ANYMORE!!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, OSINO? ARE YOU TOTALLY IN LOVE WITH HER?
I JUST THINK IT WOULD BE RUDE TO HER, TO BE IN THIS RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT FEELING THE SAME WAY SHE DOES

シガテラ

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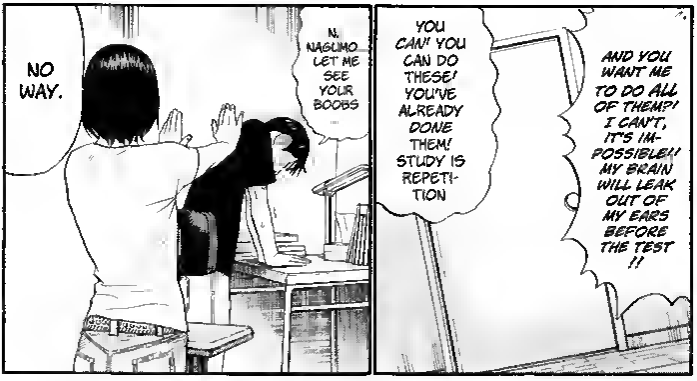
Chapter 50: A Better Environment

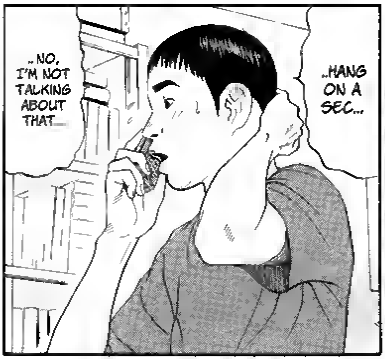
Mitsuhiro Koshi, here.
It's all thanks to this guy.
Yesterday we held a debate about "Why Japanese men are so, internationally unglamorous."
Why are most of the races held to be "sexy" white? When will the Asian age come?
HMMMMM... HARD TO IMAGINE, REALLY...
YEAH... NOT DURING OUR GENERATION, I'M SURE...
I THINK A LOT OF IT IS MOVIES DON'T YOU? GUYS SURE LOOK COOL IN THEM.
AND PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WATCHING THEM FOR GENERATIONS NOW.
YEAH! THEY'RE AWESOME IN FLICKS!
On the other hand, with my studying...
...UMM... WHAT'S THAT REALLY BIG AND HEAVY-LOOKING BAG FOR?

HURGGH !!!
RIGHT IN ONE!
THIS ISN'T... LIKE ANOTHER PILE OF TEST QUESTION BOOKS, IS IT..?


NO WAY.
N. NAGUMO LET ME SEE YOUR BOOBS
YOU CAN! YOU CAN DO THESE! YOU'VE ALREADY DONE THEM! STUDY IS REPETI-TION
AND YOU WANT ME TO DO ALL OF THEM?! I CAN'T, IT'S IM-POSSIBLE!! MY BRAIN WILL LEAK OUT OF MY EARS BEFORE THE TEST !!

...WHAT A PIG... HE IS SOOOO DIS-GUSTING...
S-STOP SINGING THAT STUPID SONG! TAKE IT SERI-OUSLY! YOU HAVE TO DO ALL OF THESE WITHIN THE WEEK!!
NAAAAGU-MO'S CLIIITORIS NAAAGUMO'S CLIIITO-RISSSS

Are pushing me to my limits...
The extreme sexual withdrawal and stress...
...I appreciate that she's helping me, but her expectations are high.


...NO, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THAT...
...HANG ON A SEC...

HEY YOU'RE STUDYING NOW, REMEMBER?

fighting against our common enemy exams
We have pooled our strength to create a better environment,

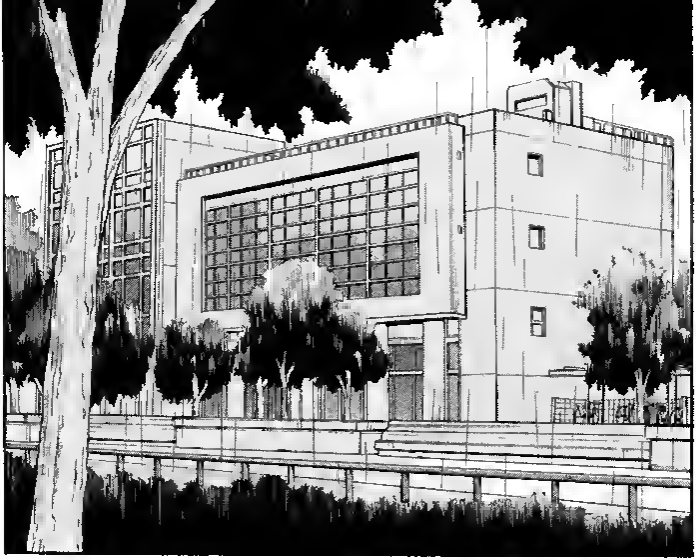
SHE JUST BURSTS INTO TEARS, WHETHER SHE'S HAPPY OR SAD EVEN ON THE TRAIN. IT'S HORRIBLE.
Koshi seems to be having trouble giving enough attention to his crybaby girlfriend

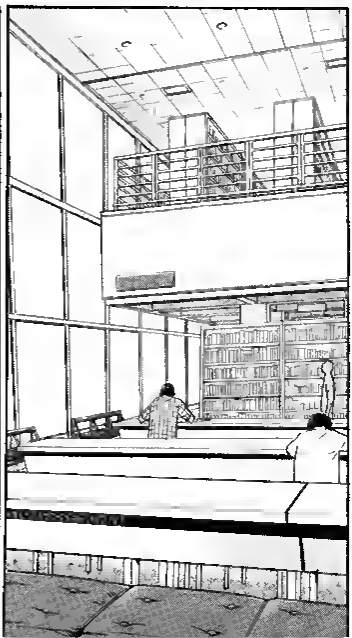
We'll hold study sessions here.
We settled on the library that lies inbetween our houses.

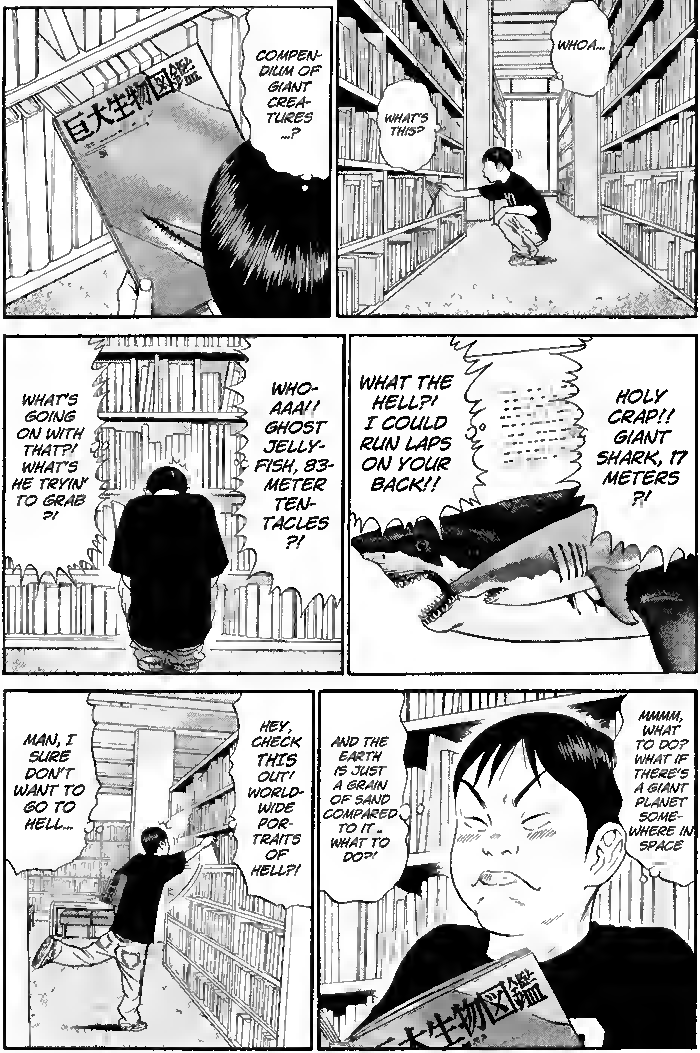
The perfect refresher for a tired brain!
And even better, there's a bowling alley and stuff right in the area

It's a wonderful place... It's an excellent library, but there are hardly any people there.

NO, YOU CAN'T COME! WE PROMISED, NO LADY-FRIENDS!
NO!! I'M GOING TOO!! I AM !!
We, both suffered outrage from our girl-friends, but held fast...
THAT'S CRAZY! IT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE!



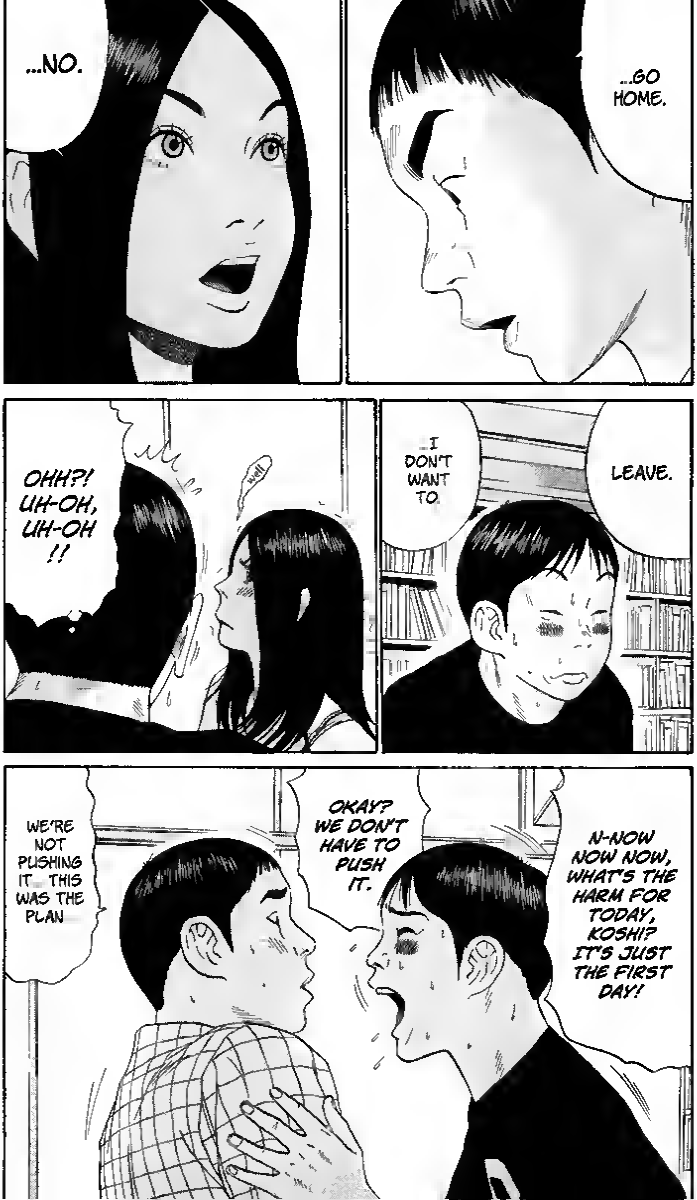


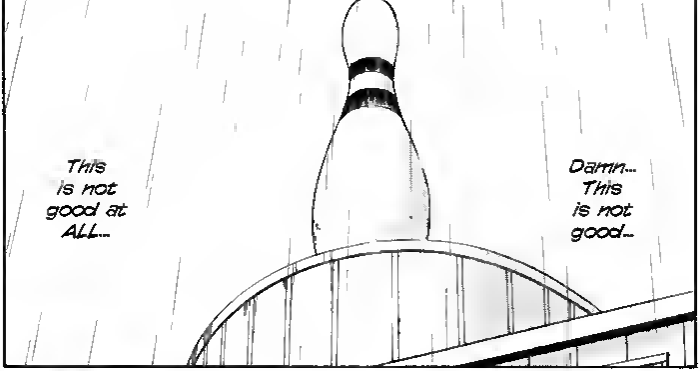

巨大生物図鑑
COMPENDIUM OF GIANT CREATURES ...?
WHOA...
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THAT? WHAT'S HE TRYIN' TO GRAB ?!
WHO-AAA!! GHOST JELLY-FISH, 83-METER TENTACLES ?!
WHAT THE HELL?! I COULD RUN LAPS ON YOUR BACK!!
HOLY CRAP!! GIANT SHARK, 17 METERS ?!
MAN, I SURE DON'T WANT TO GO TO HELL...
HEY, CHECK THIS OUT! WORLD-WIDE PORTRAITS OF HELL?!
AND THE EARTH IS JUST A GRAIN OF SAND COMPARED TO IT - WHAT TO DO?!
MMMM, WHAT TO DO? WHAT IF THERE'S A GIANT PLANET SOMEWHERE IN SPACE
巨大生物図鑑

LET'S SEE, NOW... HUH? WHICH WAY DID I COME FROM?
...THIS PLACE IS SO BIG, YOU CAN GET LOST...
..HMM?
OH!!

UM... YEAH. IT'S OKAY..
UM, SORRY OGINO... SHE JUST TAGGED ALONG..
...THAT'S KOSHI'S GIRL-FRIEND...
UH-OH.. SHE'S HERE...
I DIDN'T "TAG ALONG," I TOLD YOU I WAS COMING YESTER-DAY!
AND I TOLD YOU NO!
WELL AT LEAST LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF! HIII! I'M RITSUKO OHTA.
JUST KNOCK IT OFF! GO HOME!
UM.. HIII
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO ACT LIKE THIS? OGINO'S TRYING TO STUDY, TOO!
YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T COMING YESTER-DAY. YOU LIED TO ME!
I DIDN'T SAY THAT! YOU DECIDED IT ON YOUR OWN! I DIDN'T LIE!
YES, YOU DID! YOU'RE SO SELF-ISH!
UM.. THERE, THERE

LOOK, HE'S GOT SOME WEIRD BOOK.
HUH?!
HE TOOK OUT A BOOK THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH STUDYING.
HE'S NOT WORKING AT ALL.
SEE? THIS IS LIKE HALF-PLAYTIME FOR YOU GUYS.
NO FAIR! YOU'RE THE ONE LYING TO ME
GO
COME ON.. LET'S GO OUTSIDE.. WE NEED TO TALK.
NOOOOO!
COME ON, SAY IT WITH ME, "NOOO!"
N. NOOOOO.
GO

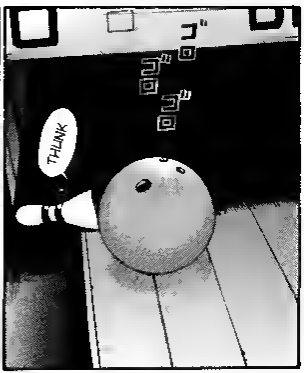

...NO.
...GO HOME.
OHH?! UH-OH, UH-OH !!
...I DON'T WANT TO.
LEAVE.
WE'RE NOT PUSHING IT. THIS WAS THE PLAN
OKAY? WE DON'T HAVE TO PUSH IT.
N-NOW NOW NOW, WHAT'S THE HARM FOR TODAY, KOSHI? IT'S JUST THE FIRST DAY!


This is not good at ALL...
Damn... This is not good...

Koshi is SUPER pissed...

He's pissed...

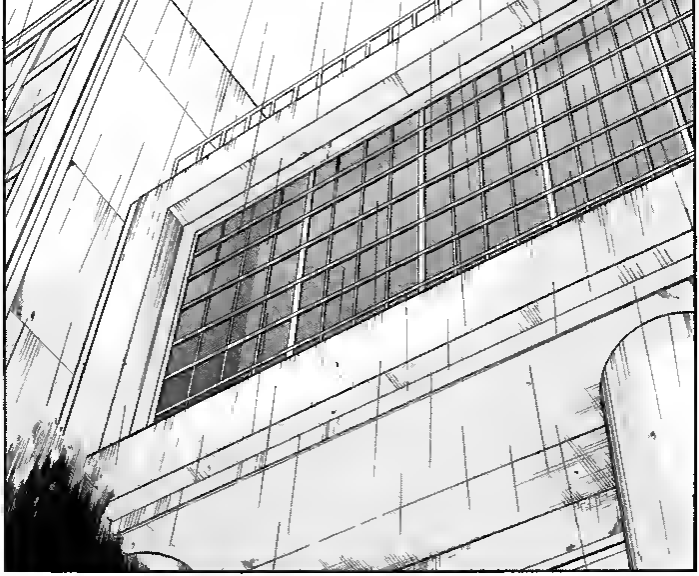
She's having fun...
YIP-PEEEE, I GOT A SPARE!


ゴロゴロゴロ
THUNK

HUH? BUT SHE'S AT COLLEGE...
CALL YOUR GIRLFRIEND, OGINO! WE CAN PLAY TEAMS!
YEAH, GREAT! GOOD JOB!
DID YOU SEE THAT?! THE FIRST SPARE OF MY LIFE! ISN'T THAT AWESOME?!
HI... NAGUMO HOW ARE YOU?
H... HELLO?
HEY, IS SHE CALLING YOU? TELL HER TO COME!
OH!
CHANG-CHAKA CHANG-CHAKA
GO BIG
WHO WAS THAT?! ARE THERE GIRLS THERE?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WAIT A MINUTE! ARE YOU AT A BOWLING ALLEY?!!
UH-OHHHHH, OGINO'S LYING OVER THE PHONE!
YEP... WE'RE STUDYING...
HUH? OH YEAH... WITH KOSHI...

NO, I'LL BE COOL... SOMEHOW I THINK..
..ARE YOU GONNA BE OKAY? SORRY, OGINO..
YEAH, IT'S OKAY! SEE YOU TONIGHT !!
NO.. YES, I KNOW!! ..YEAH, YEAH!!
HEY, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN GOING OUT WITH HER?
NO.. SHE'S GOT WORK TO GO TO NOW.. SURE SOUNDED LIKE SHE WANTED TO COME
DID SHE SAY SHE'S COMING?
I SURE DO... WITH HIGH FREQUENCY..
DO YOU TOTALLY TELL HER SAPPY STUFF LIKE "I LOVE YOU SWEETHEART, YOU'RE MY ONLY LOVE, BABY"?
WOW, THAT'S PRETTY LONG
UMM.. A YEAR? JUST ABOUT A FULL YEAR...

I TELL KOSHI ALL THE TIME BUT HE'S NEVER SAID ANYTHING EVEN REMOTELY RESEMBLING THAT TO ME IN RETURN
INSTEAD, HE TELLS ME THESE HORRIBLE THINGS LIKE I SAY THEM TOO OFTEN, AND IT GIVES THE WORDS LESS WEIGHT!
YESTERDAY HE ACTUALLY SAID MY LOVE WAS LIKE THE ECONOMY-CLASS SUPER-VALUE MEAL!
KNOCK IT OFF, RIC-CHAN!!
WE'VE PLAYED TWO GAMES OF BOWLING!
WE'RE GOING BACK TO THE LIBRARY, AND YOU'RE GOING HOME!
WHAT? DIDN'T YOU CALL OFF YOUR STUDY THING TODAY?!
NO, WE DIDN'T! WE SAID WE WERE GOING TO DO THIS!
..IT'S NOT CALLED OFF?
SORRY, OGINO CAN YOU GO ON AHEAD?
UMM .. SURE



IF HE REALLY IS, THEN... WOULDN'T IT BE MOSTLY MY FAULT?
...I DON'T THINK KOSHI WOULD ACTUALLY TALK ABOUT... BREAKING UP, RIGHT IN THE ALLEY..
...ARE THEY REALLY GOING AT EACH OTHER IN THERE?
OH!
...
GO BIG

...OGINO...
IS EVERY-THING OKAY... KOSHI?
NO.. IT'S COOL..
SORRY FOR TAKING SO LONG
...I.. I'M SUCH A TERRIBLE PERSON.. I MEAN, REALLY I'M AS LOW AS THEY GO...
I RUINED HER LIFE
I JUST SAID WE SHOULD BREAK UP...
HUH?

シガテラ

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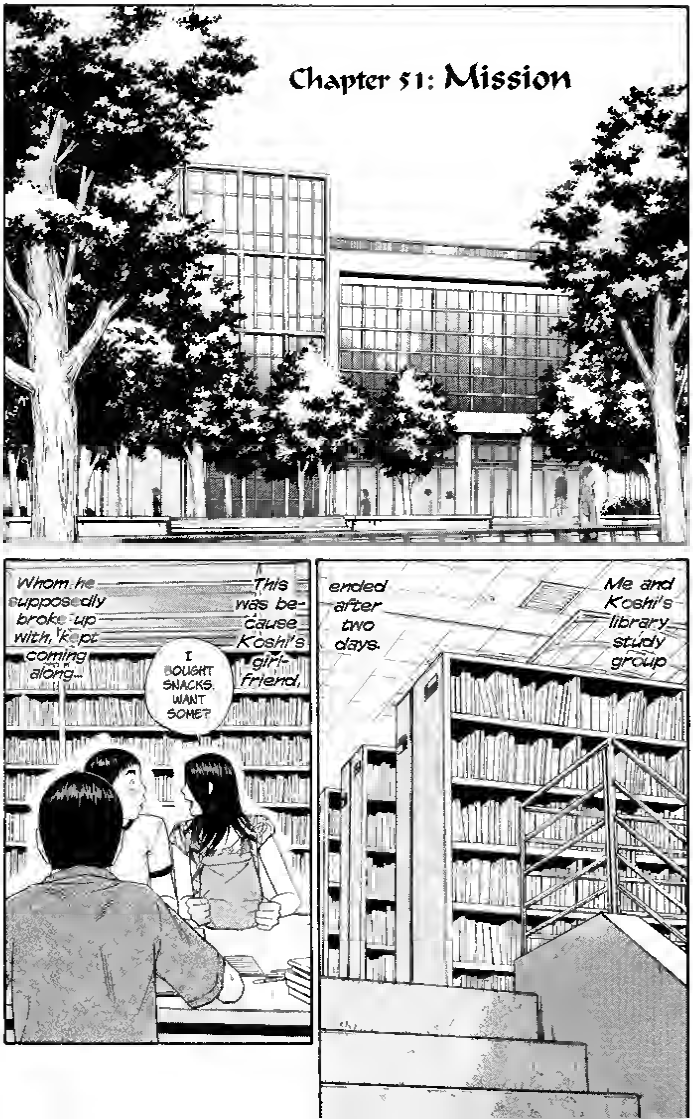
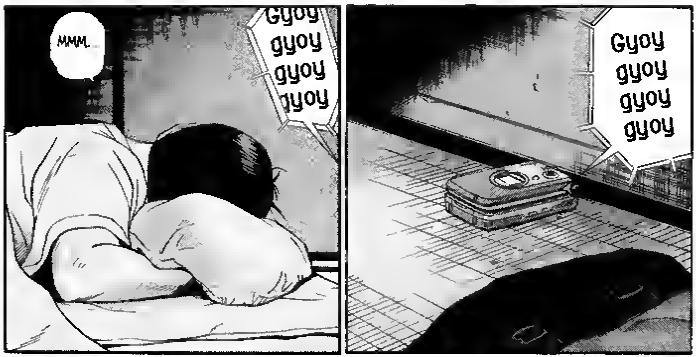
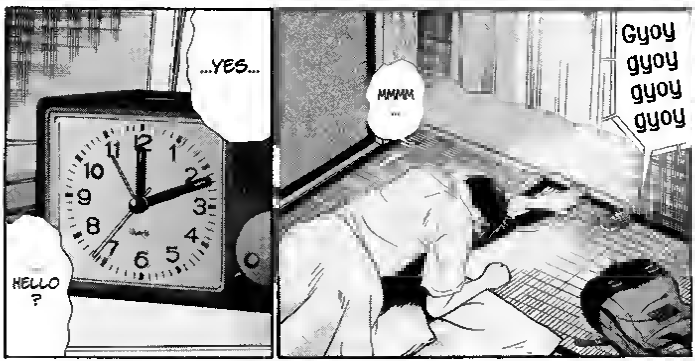
lettered by barbpp


Chapter 51: Mission
Me and Koshi's library study group
ended after two days.
This was because Koshi's girlfriend,
Whom he supposedly broke up with, kept coming along...
I BOUGHT SNACKS. WANT SOME?

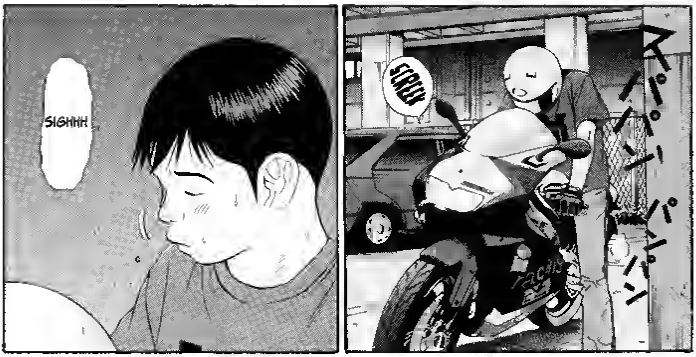
She even calls him more than when they went out.
She still shows up at his house.
She has no recognition that he dumped her.
Possibly because I was what convinced him to make the decision to break up...
I feel a bit... no, a LOT of responsibility for this.
IT'S... THE ONLY PLACE WHERE I CAN GET SOME PEACE...
HONESTLY, THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE SHE STILL DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT...
KOSHI
..WHY EXACTLY CAN'T YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH HER?
UM... I'VE JUST BEEN KIND OF WONDERING..
HMM? WHAT?
H-HEY, KOSHI... CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?

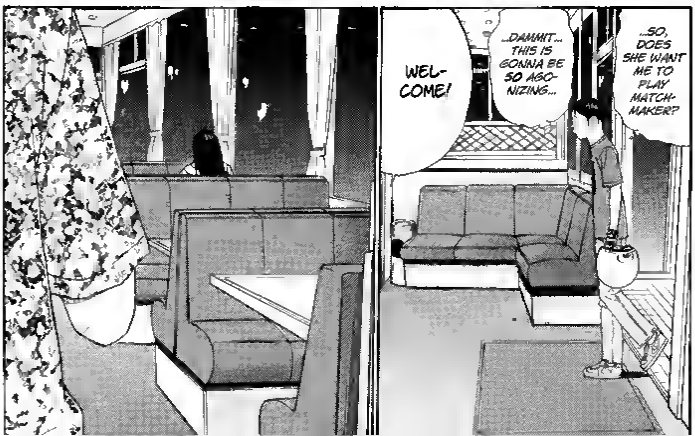
SHE'S A GREAT GIRL... TOO MUCH FOR ME, I THINK...
NO, SHE'S VERY NICE...
.. IS THERE SOME LIKE, UNSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEM?
TRUE, SHE MIGHT HAVE A BIT TOO MUCH ENERGY BUT I THINK SHE'S AWFUL CUTE...
YOU KNOW THAT SHE'S DEFINITELY ON THE PRETTY SIDE, AS FAR AS MOST PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED?
SO THEN... WHAT KIND OF GIRLS DO YOU LIKE?
OGINO
NO... I DON'T THINK SO...
AND THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF MAKING UP WITH HER?
WELL, I WOULDN'T SAY WEIRD...
WHY? DOES THAT MAKE ME WEIRD?
BUT I GUESS I CAN ONLY SEE HER AS A FRIEND...
YEAH, I KNOW THAT! I DON'T HAVE LIKE, WEIRD TASTES IN WOMEN


MMM...
Gyoy gyoy gyoy gyoy
Gyoy gyoy gyoy gyoy

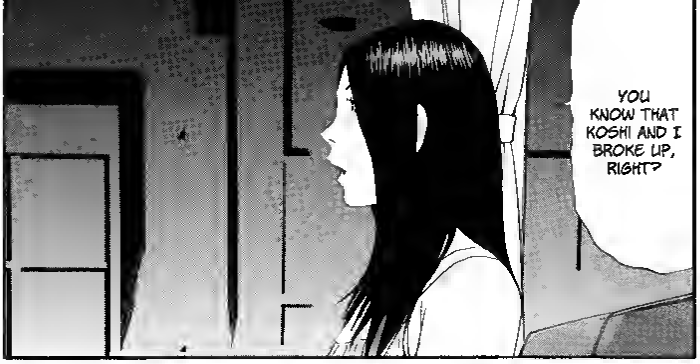

...YES...
HELLO ?
MMMM...
Gyoy gyoy gyoy gyoy

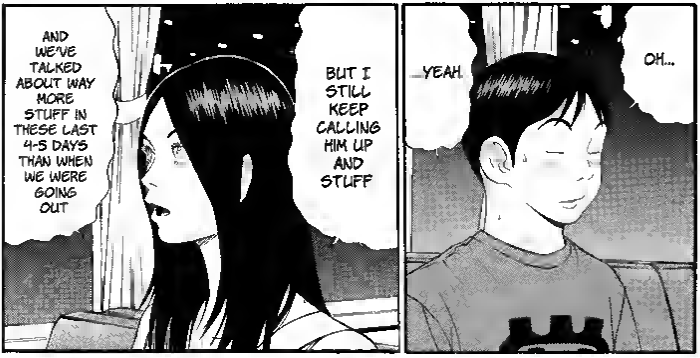
...HUH?
Can I meet with you?
This is Ritsuko Ohta
Oh, hello? Ogino?
Right now! And don't tell Koshi, of course!
HUH? ...BUT...
I need to talk about something. Come to the restaurant near the library.
WAIT... HELLO?!
...WH...
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
...


SIGHHH
VROOM
ドゥーン ドゥーン


WEL-COME!
...DAMMIT... THIS IS GONNA BE SO AGO-NIZING...
...SO, DOES SHE WANT ME TO PLAY MATCH-MAKER?

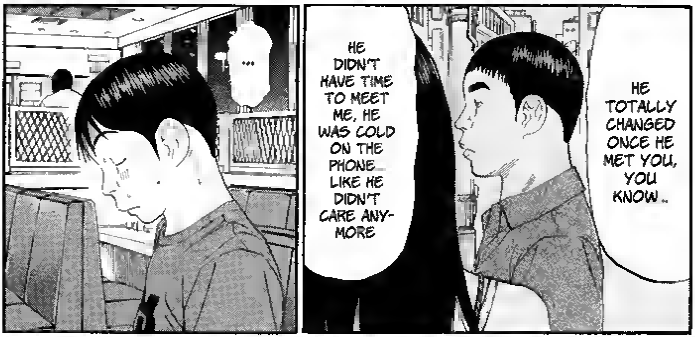
GOOD EVENING.
UM... HI... GOOD EVENING.
..WHAT WAS THE TOPIC?
..SO, UM...
NO, IT'S.. COOL...
SORRY... YOU WERE SLEEPING, HUH?


YOU KNOW THAT KOSHI AND I BROKE UP, RIGHT?


OH...
...YEAH.
BUT I STILL KEEP CALLING HIM UP AND STUFF
AND WE'VE TALKED ABOUT WAY MORE STUFF IN THESE LAST 4-5 DAYS THAN WHEN WE WERE GOING OUT

KOSHI HAS A LOT MORE FUN BEING WITH YOU THAN HE DOES WITH ME.
WHEN HE'S WITH ME, HE SAYS HE FEELS CONSTRICTED, LIKE HE'S LOST HIS FREEDOM.

WHAAAT ?!
..KOSHI REALLY SAID THAT?!
YES, HE DID.. AND EVEN WORSE THINGS..

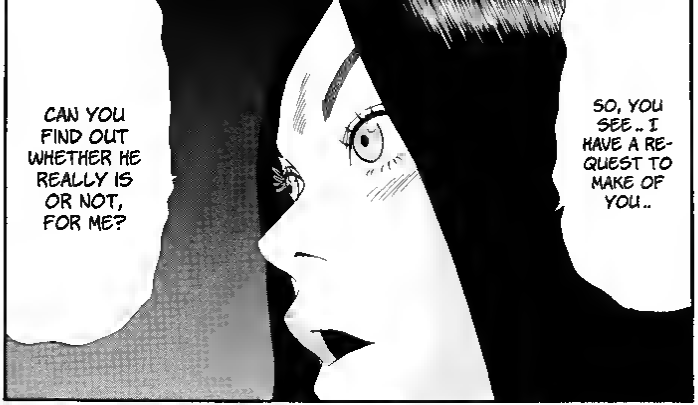

HE TOTALLY CHANGED ONCE HE MET YOU, YOU KNOW..
HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO MEET ME, HE WAS COLD ON THE PHONE... LIKE HE DIDN'T CARE ANY-MORE
...

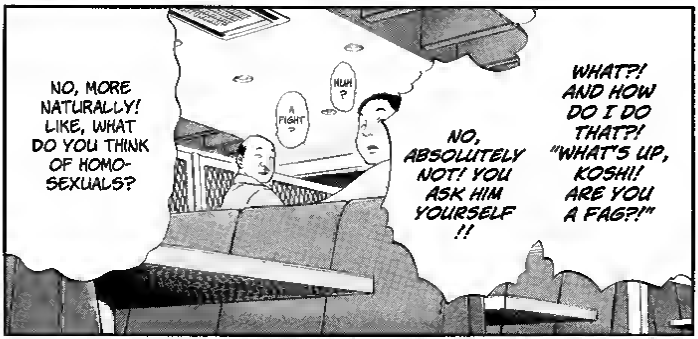
I'M GOING TO BE STRAIGHT IT'S BASI-CALLY YOUR FAULT THIS HAPPENED TO US

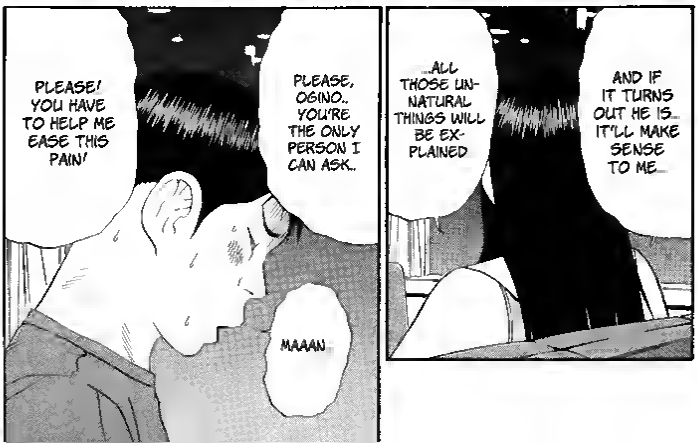
I'M JUST TELLING THE TRUTH AS CALMLY AS I CAN.
I'M SORRY, OGINO... I DIDN'T CALL YOU HERE TO BLAME YOU.
...BUT I DIDN'T
...BUT...
I MEAN... MAYBE HE WAS TRYING TO SAY THERE'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF FUN ASIDE FROM THE KIND WITH A GIRL-FRIEND?
BE-CAUSE... GUYS LIKE TALKING ABOUT STUPID GUY STUFF...?
WHY DO YOU THINK KOSHI HAS MORE FUN WITH YOU THAN ME?
I THINK HE THINKS OF YOU... NOT AS A FRIEND, BUT SOMETHING... MORE.
I THINK YOU HAVE A POINT, BUT MY THEORY IS DIFFERENT...

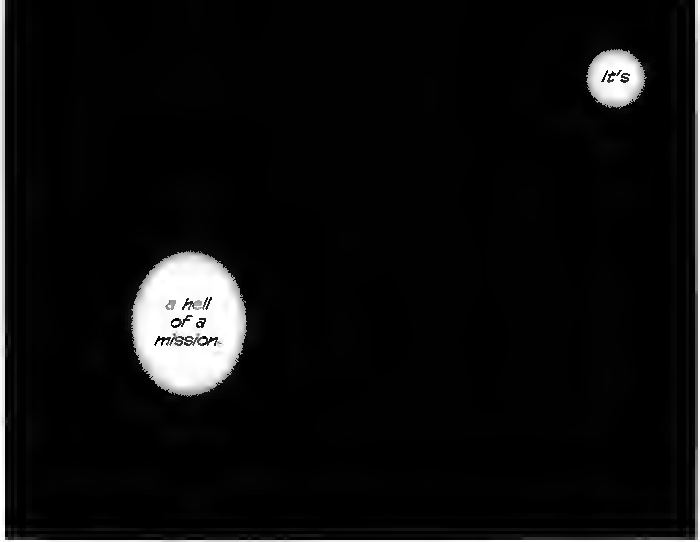
...UMM. WAIT A MINUTE.. YOU, UH...
YOU REALIZE... YOU'RE MAKING A VERY... SERIOUS ACCUSATION, HERE?
I THINK... THAT KOSHI IS GAY.
T-THAT'S A LIE!! THAT CAN'T BE TRUE!!
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?! WHAT'S YOUR PROOF?!!

I'VE BEEN CLOSE TO HIM FOR A WHILE.. AND I THINK IT'S POSSIBLE!
NOW, HANG ON! I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE! IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT STARTED NOW!
AND THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SAY SUCH A THING, DOES IT?! I DON'T SEE ANY GAYDAR EQUIPPED ON YOU !!
INTUITION?!!
NOTHING.. JUST MY INTUITION!
THAT HE DOESN'T EVEN REALIZE IT HIMSELF
I THINK.. THERE'S ABOUT A 50/50 CHANCE..
AND IT'S BECOME A REALLY SERIOUS PROBLEM SINCE YOU SHOWED UP
OF COURSE, AT FIRST I THOUGHT I WAS JUST BEING STUPID... BUT MY SUSPICION HAS ONLY GROWN
FOR SOME REASON, I'M MORE CALM ABOUT THIS THAN ANYTHING IN MY LIFE IN YEARS
LOOK, I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I'M NOT JUST SLANDERING HIM BECAUSE HE DUMPED ME!
WE'VE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER, AND I'VE NEVER FELT A SMIDGEN OF THAT FROM HIM...
AND.. I THINK THAT'S 0% TRUE.


SO, YOU SEE.. I HAVE A REQUEST TO MAKE OF YOU..
CAN YOU FIND OUT WHETHER HE REALLY IS OR NOT, FOR ME?

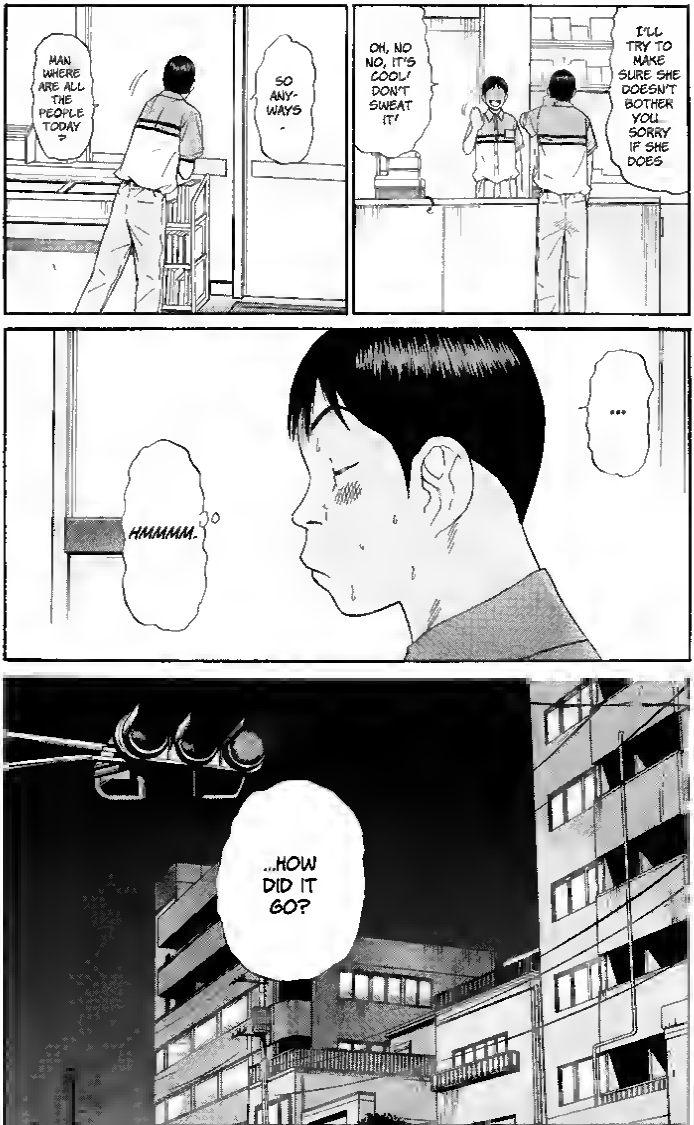

WHAT?! AND HOW DO I DO THAT?! "WHAT'S UP, KOSHI! ARE YOU A FAG?!"
HUH?
A FIGHT?
NO, ABSOLUTELY NOT! YOU ASK HIM YOURSELF !!
NO, MORE NATURALLY! LIKE, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HOMO-SEXUALS?


AND IF IT TURNS OUT HE IS.. IT'LL MAKE SENSE TO ME..
..ALL THOSE UN-NATURAL THINGS WILL BE EX-PLAINED
PLEASE, OGINO.. YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON I CAN ASK..
PLEASE! YOU HAVE TO HELP ME EASE THIS PAIN!
MAAAN


It's
a hell
of a
mission.

...it's
been
ages...
since I've
had a
top-level,
Taniwaki-
class
mission...

It would mean Koshi...
thinks about kissing me?
...IF... IF RITSUKO HAD PUSHED HER POINT FURTHER ...
T-THAT'S CRAZY !!
THAT IS CRAZY !!!
HEY, OGINO.
CRAY ?!!
LMM, HEY I LOST THE NOTE I PUT YOUR NUMBER ON..
YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY CALLS FROM RICCHAN, HAVE YOU?
HUH? UHHHHH NO?
I DON'T THINK SO
SHE'S REALLY RUTHLESS THESE DAYS. I THINK SHE MIGHT TRY TO INFLICT HERSELF ON YOU


MAN WHERE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE TODAY ?
SO ANY-WAYS -
OH, NO NO, IT'S COOL! DON'T SWEAT IT!
I'LL TRY TO MAKE SURE SHE DOESN'T BOTHER YOU. SORRY IF SHE DOES
...
HMMMM.
...HOW DID IT GO?

DID YOU GET THE ANSWER OUT OF HIM LIKE I ASKED?
..NO.. I HAVEN'T ASKED YET..
WHAAAT? WHY NOT?! I'VE BEEN DYING TO FIND OUT ALL DAY LONG!!
BUT... BUT IT'S JUST IMPOS-SIBLE! I'M NOT GETTING THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF IT FROM HIM!
YOU'RE THINKING TOO MUCH INTO THIS! YOU'RE JUST WRONG !!
DON'T DECIDE THAT ON YOUR OWN! AND IT'S NOT LIKE I'M JUST GOING OFF A FEELING!

OKAY... KOSHI AND I... GOT PRETTY CLOSE TO HAVING SEX, TWICE...
AND BOTH TIMES... HE JUST... DIDN'T GET HARD, AT ALL...
W-WELL, NO, NOTHING THAT SOLID!
WHAT, THEN?! DID YOU FIND GAY PORNO IN HIS ROOM?!
WHAT, THEN?! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT ABOUT YOUR EX?!
OH, COME ON! THAT COULD BE A MILLION THINGS! HE COULD HAVE BEEN NERVOUS, OR FEELING TIRED!!
NO! NO, IT WASN'T THAT!! HE WAS PERFECTLY HEALTHY, HE SAID!!
YEAH... WELL, IT'S WEIRD, ISN'T IT?
...AND... AND THAT'S IT?
ARE YOU PICKING A FIGHT WITH ME, OGINO?! ARE YOU DOUBTING MY FEMININE CHARMS?!
NO, LOOK, I'M NOT, OKAY, BUT...
JUST ASK HIM TOMORROW!! SWEAR YOU WILL!!
OR WHAT?! I'M JUST NOT ENOUGH WOMAN FOR HIM?!
OKAY, WELL, MAYBE HE'S IMPOTENT, OR...

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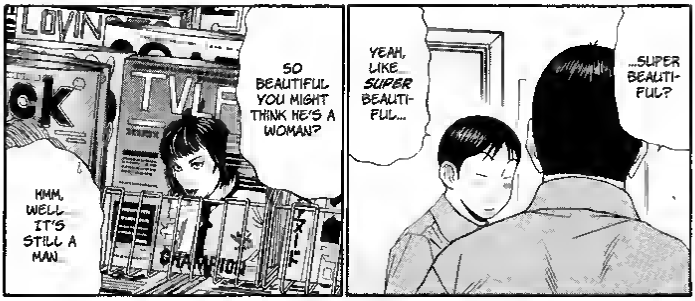
a //barbapapa
a.//pnyxtr
a.//flyingrobots
@://a filipino ninja secret agent

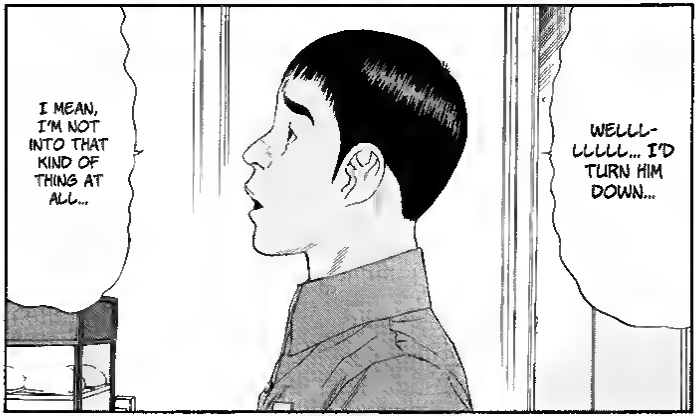
Chapter 52: Double Agent

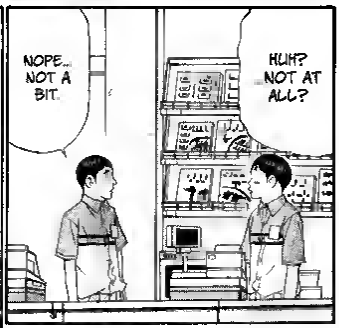
HUH?
H.. HEY KOSHI..
ELTON JOHN?
DO YOU LIKE...
NO REASON
WHY?
WELL UMM, NOT REALLY..

HMM?
K... KOSHI...
SNIFF
...FREDDIE MERCURY?
DO YOU LIKE...
UHH... I WAS JUST ASKING...
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE GAY MUSICIANS?
WHY?
..HMM. YEAH, I GUESS I LIKE HIM...

SO... UMMMMM... HOW ABOUT THEM?
YOU KNOW... HOMO-SEXU-ALS..
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "HOW ABOUT THEM"?
WELL.. LIKE DO YOU THINK IT'S OKAY? OR NOT?
HMMMM, WELL, I GUESS SO, BASI-CALLY
I MEAN, THEY JUST TURNED OUT THAT WAY IT'S NOT THEIR FAULT
I HEAR THAT IT WAS PRETTY COMMON-PLACE BACK IN THE SEN-GOKU ERA.
LIKE, EVEN THE MOST FAMOUS GENERALS WOULD GET TOGETHER AND ALL..
OH YEAH ...?
I ALSO HEARD THAT EVERY GUY HAS SOME ELEMENT OF IT IN HIM.
IT'S JUST A MATTER OF HOW MUCH, I SUP-POSE
MMM. RIGHT
SO.. SO, LET'S SAY YOU'RE GOING HOME TODAY
AND SOME SUUUUPER BEAUTIFUL GUY COMES UP AND SAYS "BE MY LOVER, HOT STUFF!" ..WHAT DO YOU DO?


...SUPER BEAUTIFUL?
YEAH, LIKE... SUPER BEAUTIFUL...
SO BEAUTIFUL YOU MIGHT THINK HE'S A WOMAN?
HMM, WELL... IT'S STILL A MAN...


WELLL-LLLLL... I'D TURN HIM DOWN...
I MEAN, I'M NOT INTO THAT KIND OF THING AT ALL...

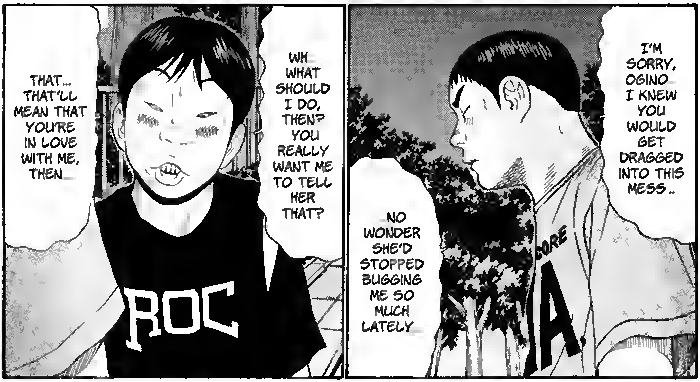

HUH? ...NOT AT ALL?
NOPE... NOT A BIT.

NOT EVEN THE TINIEST SLIVER? EVEN SOMETHING THAT JUST POPS UP AT ODD MOMENTS...?
NOT THE TINIEST SLIVER. NO POPPING UP... UMM, OSINO?
YES?

WHAT DID RICCHAN TELL YOU?
SHE'S BEEN TALKING WITH YOU, HASN'T SHE? SHE'S TELLING YOU SHE THINKS I'M GAY... IS THAT IT?
HUH?
YOU CAN TELL ME, OGINO... IT'S OKAY I SWEAR I WON'T TELL HER...

..I SEE NOW...
SIGHH-HHHH. SO...
DID SHE SAY.. IF I REALLY WAS LIKE THAT, SHE WOULD BACK OFF..?
YEAH.. SHE SAID SHE WAS READY FOR IT..
OKAY, THEN TELL HER THAT.
NEXT TIME SHE CALLS YOU, JUST SAY THAT.
WHAT?! YOU WANT ME TO TELL HER YOU'RE GAY?!

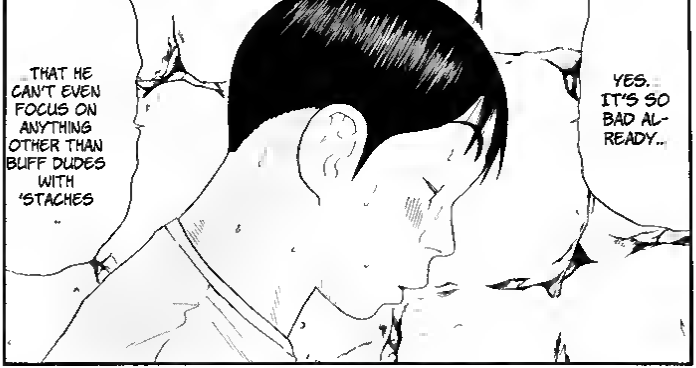
I'M FINE... GRADUATION IS CLOSE AND I DON'T THINK ANYONE WOULD BELIEVE IT...
BUT... BUT WHAT IF THAT GETS OUT? WON'T IT BE HARD TO GO TO SCHOOL?!

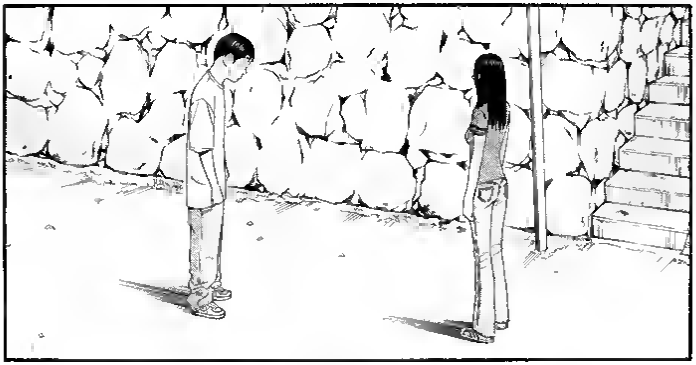

THAT... THAT'LL MEAN THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME, THEN...
WH- WHAT SHOULD I DO, THEN? YOU REALLY WANT ME TO TELL HER THAT?
NO WONDER SHE'D STOPPED BUGGING ME SO MUCH LATELY...
I'M SORRY, OSINO... I KNEW YOU WOULD GET DRAGGED INTO THIS MESS...

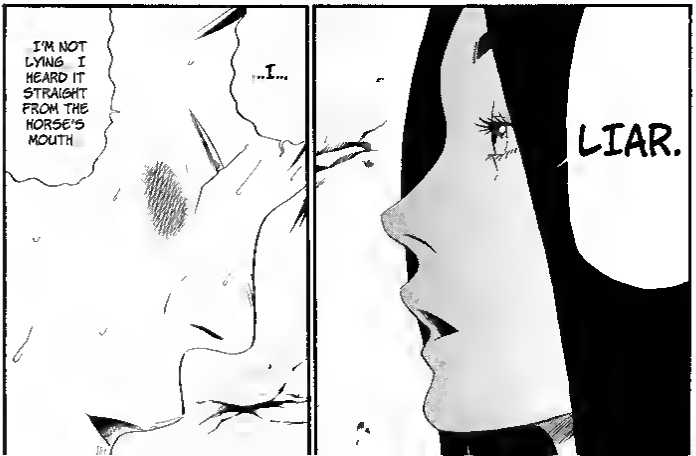
NO... THEN SHE'LL JUST LATCH ONTO YOU INSTEAD... WE'LL USE SOMETHING MORE EXTREME...
MORE EXTREME ...?

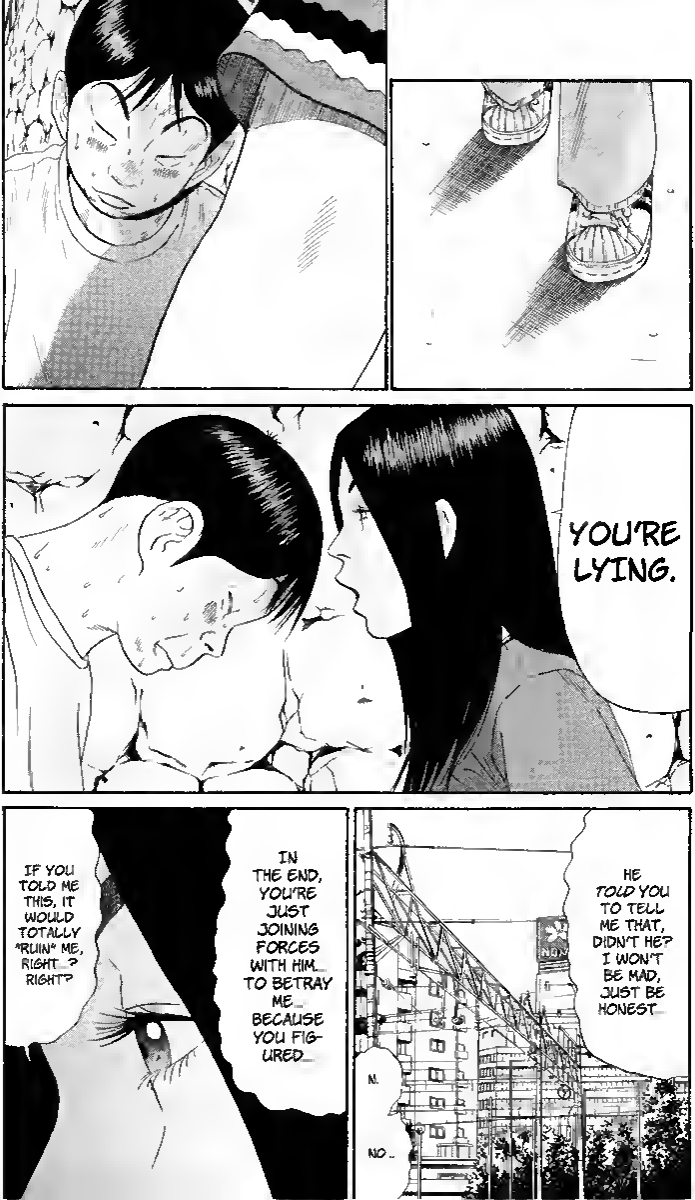
MUSTACHIOED MACHO MEN?

...KOSHI SAID HE LIKES MUSTACHIOED MACHO MEN?


..THAT HE CAN'T EVEN FOCUS ON ANYTHING OTHER THAN BUFF DUDES WITH 'STACHES
YES. IT'S SO BAD AL-READY..




I'M NOT LYING I HEARD IT STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH
..I...
LIAR.

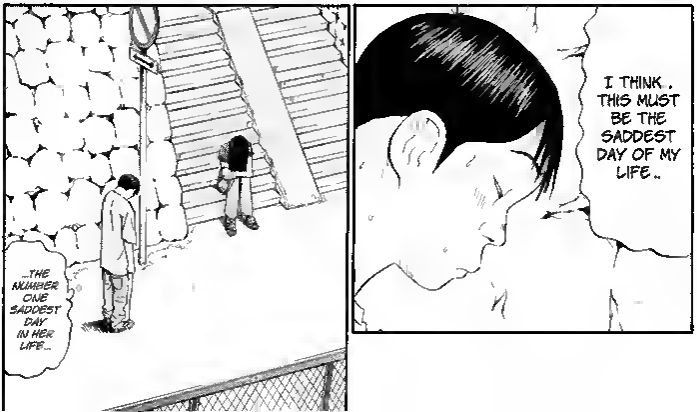

YOU'RE LYING.
HE TOLD YOU TO TELL ME THAT, DIDN'T HE? I WON'T BE MAD, JUST BE HONEST…
NO…
IN THE END, YOU'RE JUST JOINING FORCES WITH HIM… TO BETRAY ME… BECAUSE YOU FIGURED…
IF YOU TOLD ME THIS, IT WOULD TOTALLY "RUIN" ME, RIGHT…? RIGHT?

SIGHHHH...

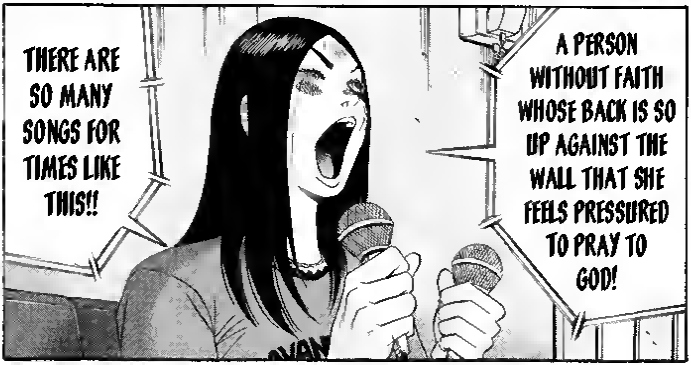
...ALL RIGHT... FINE, I GET IT...
I GUESS HE REALLY DOES HATE ME... IF HE'S WILLING TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING THAT STUPID...

JUST FORGET ABOUT IT...
NO... HE NEVER SAID ANY-THING LIKE THAT. HE'S VERY NICE, A VERY GOOD GUY..

GOD, MY LIFE BLOWS RIGHT NOW...
AAAAAAH-HHH.. SHIT, THIS SUCKS..


...THE NUMBER ONE SADDEST DAY IN HER LIFE...
I THINK, THIS MUST BE THE SADDEST DAY OF MY LIFE..

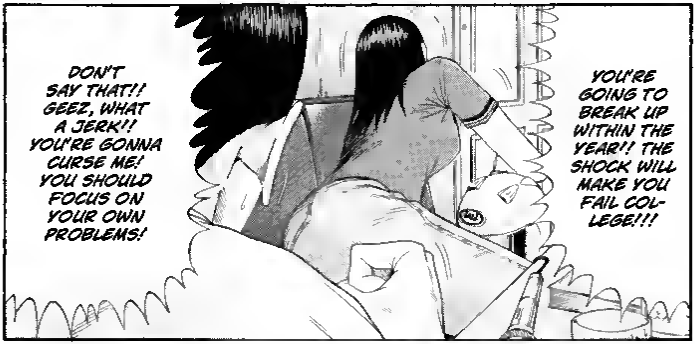
WELL... IT MIGHT BE TOUGH NOW... BUT YOU'RE A LIVELY, PRETTY GIRL... YOU'LL BE FINE.
THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF GUYS WHO WILL LOVE YOU. SO CHEER UP.
...OGINO... I CAN'T GO HOME TONIGHT
WHAT?! WHY NOT?!
SEE... IT'S POSSIBLE THAT I JUST MIGHT JUMP OVER THAT FENCE... AND MAKE A HUGE MESS OF MYSELF ON THE TRAIN TRACKS...


THERE ARE SO MANY SONGS FOR TIMES LIKE THIS!!
A PERSON WITHOUT FAITH WHOSE BACK IS SO UP AGAINST THE WALL THAT SHE FEELS PRESSURED TO PRAY TO GOD!

Note: Gegege no Kitaro is a famous manga/anime about all kinds of traditional Japanese spooks and goblins

IT'S NOT MY FAULT!! LET ME GO HOME! I HAVE EXAMS TO STUDY FOR!!
TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY, BETRAYER OF TRUSTS!! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT WE BROKE UP!!
ONCE YOU'VE BROKEN UP, I'LL BE YOUR GEER-FREN!!
I'M NOT !!
WHAT'S THE DEAL, THEN?! WHEN WILL YOU BREAK UP WITH YOUR GIRL-FRIEND ?!
I DON'T CARE IF THAT MAKES ME CREEPY. I TRY EVERY DAY TO PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING.
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE CREEPY GUYS WHO THINKS AHEAD TO MARRIAGE AND STUFF, THEN?!
I WON'T BREAK UP WITH HER... IT WOULD BASI-CALLY MEAN DEATH TO ME

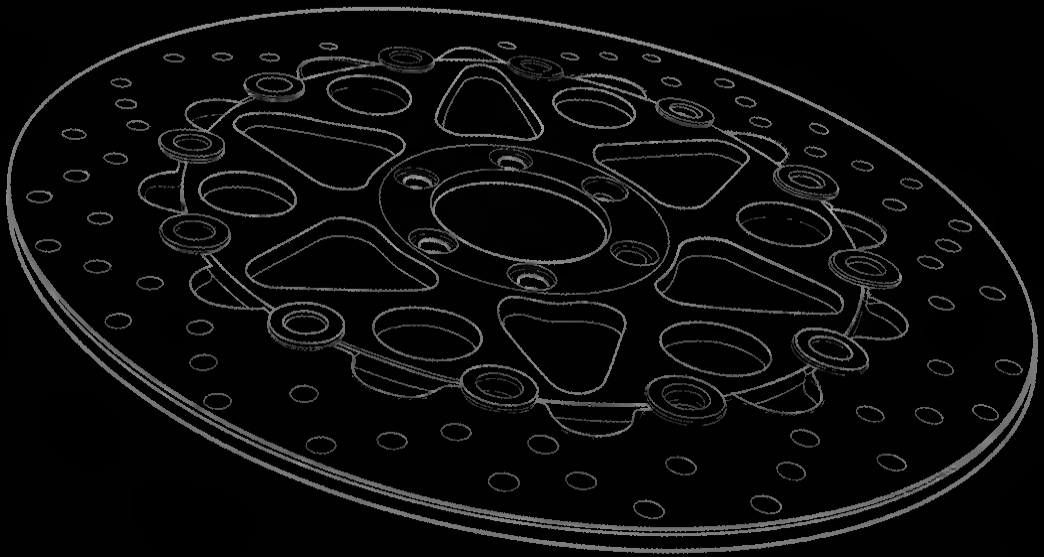
NOT... NOT EVERYONE... GOD, DON'T TALK ABOUT THAT
BUT HUMAN BEINGS ARE ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD BREAK-UP COMES FOR EVERYONE


DON'T SAY THAT!! GEEZ, WHAT A JERK!! YOU'RE GONNA CURSE ME! YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON YOUR OWN PROBLEMS!
YOU'RE GOING TO BREAK UP WITHIN THE YEAR!! THE SHOCK WILL MAKE YOU FAIL COLLEGE!!!

...I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE... I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER SEE YOU AGAIN
WHERE SHOULD WE GO TOMORROW THEN? HOW ABOUT THE BEACH?
I'M GOING HOME. THE PARTY IS OVER.
WHAT'S NEXT, THEN? WHERE SHOULD WE GO?

NOPE, I'M NOT GONNA FALL FOR THAT! YOU TERR'ISTS CAN'T GET ME DOWN! I'M LEAVING!!
MIKES
OH, COME ON! DON'T SAY THAT! THIS IS THE WORST DAY OF MY LIFE, REMEMBER?! I COULD KILL MYSELF AND MAKE THAT STATEMENT TRUE !!
NO, WAIT!! FINE, OKAY, JUST HANG ON! JUST STAY WITH ME A BIT LONGER!

SHE'S THE DEVIL! IT'S THE SONG OF THE DEVIL!!
I HOPE HE BREAKS UP TOMOR-ROWWW! THEN MY PROPHECY WILL COME TRUEEEE!
NAGUMO, SAVE ME FROM THIS PERIL!!
I HOPE HE BECOMES MY BOY-FRIEND SOOOON!
WILL OGINO EVER FALL OUT OF LOOOOVE ?



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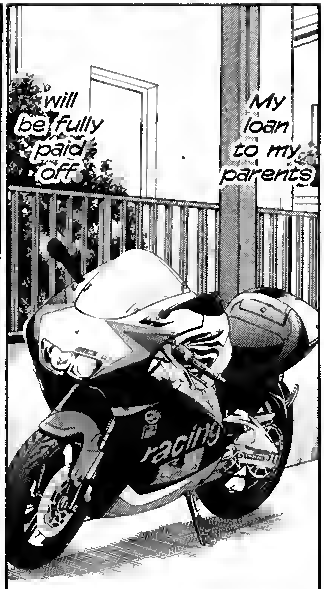
Chapter 53: Bad Feeling

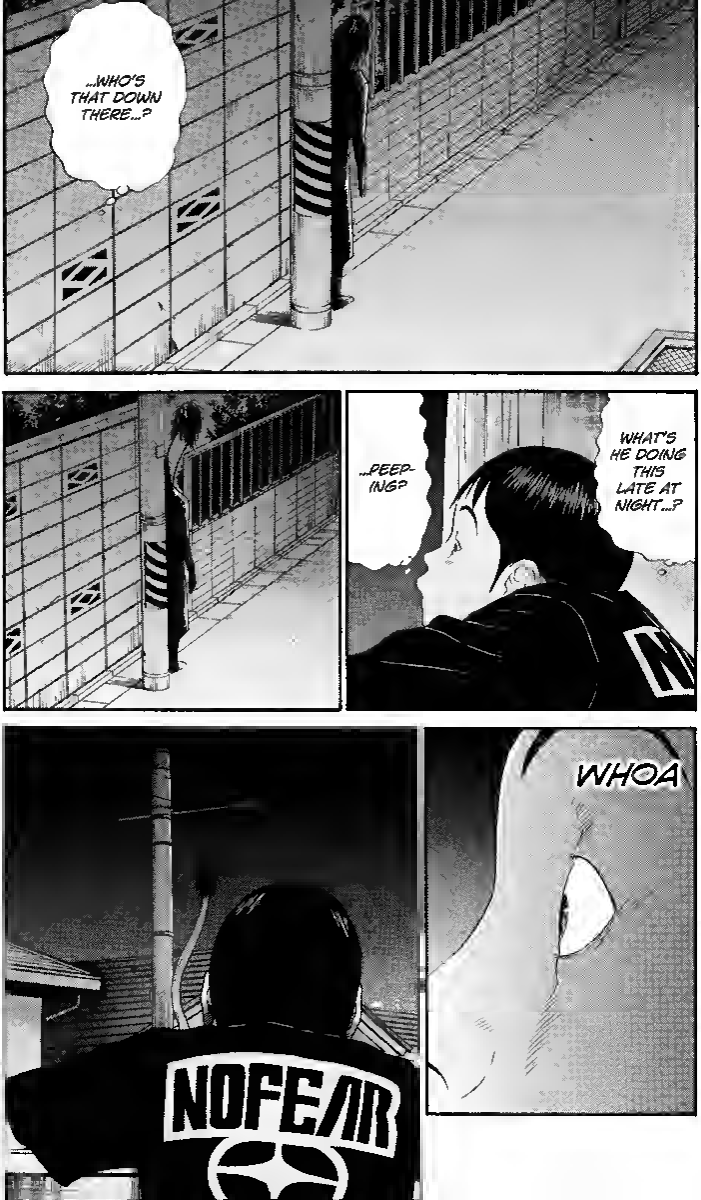
Just two more days, I will quit my job.
At the end of this week...

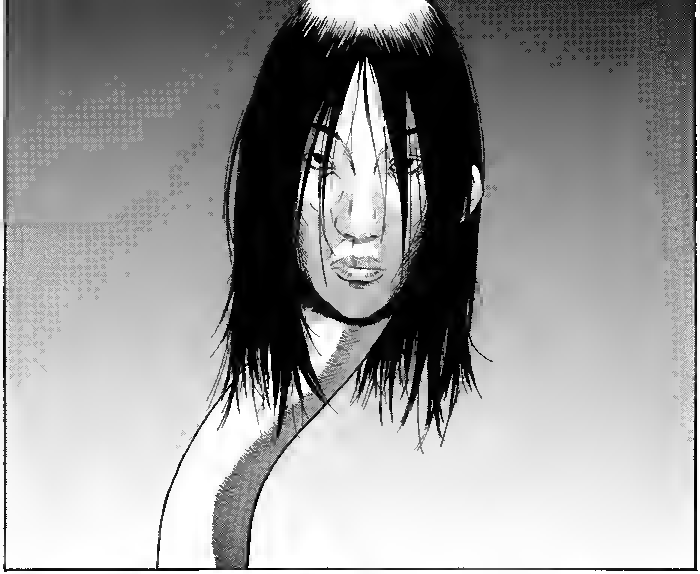
But they're both friends of mine... I'm sure I'll be able to see them without my job...
...Koshi and Ritsuko ended up splitting apart...


My loan to my parents will be fully paid off

Tomorrow I will be a studying machine. I will not feel the day is done until I have studied mightily.
But now... It's time for pure study.
NOFEAR

HUH?


...WHO'S THAT DOWN THERE...?
...PEEP-ING?
WHAT'S HE DOING THIS LATE AT NIGHT...?
WHOA
NOFEAR



UNGH !!
Wh... What the?
What the FUCK ?!!

NOFEAR
DID HE NOTICE ME...? NO... I NEED TO CLOSE THE WINDOW, THOUGH ...
NO FAIR, OGI BOYYY!

AAAGH !!
HUFF HUFF HUFF...
HUFF HUFF HUFF HUFF...
WOW.. IT'S BEEN AGES..
...JESUS
WHEWWW
SINCE I SAW A TANIWAKI DREAM.
DAMN... I'M SWEATING LIKE A PIG...

HUH? YEAH, I HAVE WORK THIS EVENING
HELLO, NAGLIMO ..? HI
chicka chicka chung cung
HEY!
WOW, AWESOME! I'LL GO TOO!! SURE, I'D LOVE TO COME ALONG!
WHAT?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?! YOU'RE ALREADY GOING TO CHECK OUT APART-MENTS?!

LET'S JUST GO! C'MON!
NOPE! NO GETTING ANGRY FOR ME
YOU WON'T COMPLAIN LATER ABOUT HOW BORING IT WAS, WILL YOU?
YOU KNOW WE CAN'T GO INSIDE, RIGHT? I JUST WANT TO CHECK OUT THE AREA AND STUFF
KUH? OHHH, YEAH, PRETTY CLOSE
BY THE WAY, OGINO, HOW'S THE STUDYING GOING? ARE YOU ALMOST THROUGH THE PROBLEM GUIDE?
THE ONE I'M GOING TO NOW IS A REALLY OLD APARTMENT BUILDING BEEN AROUND FOR 17 YEARS
NO, I'M NOT GETTING THAT YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THOSE COST?
THE KIND WITH AUTO-LOCKING DOORS AND SECURITY CAMERAS! I SAW THOSE ON TV
SO WHAT KIND OF PLACE ARE YOU GOING TO GET? LIKE A SPECIAL WOMENS' ROOM?

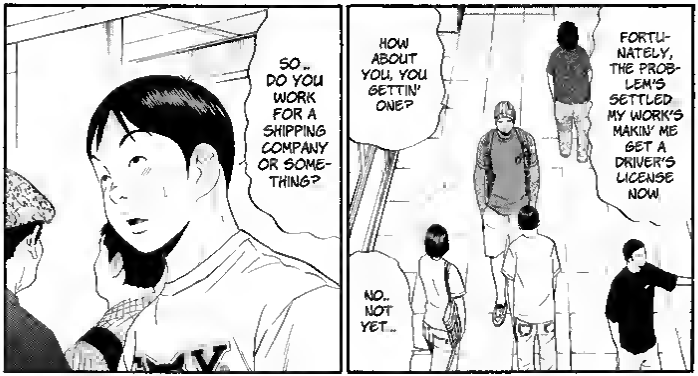
OGI BOY!
HAVE YOU EATEN LUNCH, NAGUMO? LET'S GRAB A BITE TO EAT BEFORE WE GO.

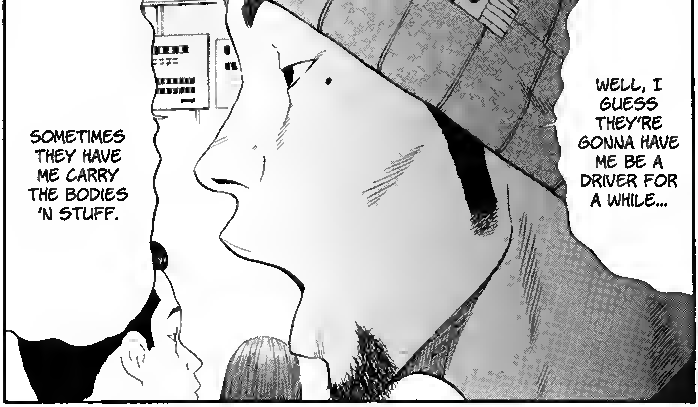
YEAAAH, I KNEW IT WAS YOU, OGI BOY...
WHAT'S GOING ON, MR. OGINO?
BEEN A FUCKIN' LONG-AS-SHIT TIME!

H... HEY
HELLOOO! I'M A FORMER CLASS-MATE!
HELLOOOO
RABBIT
...YEAH... KINDA...
LOOKIN' GOOD, MR OGI.. ON A DATE NOW?
WOW.. YOUR ARM IS...
...KINDA CRAZY
FOX

きっぷうりば
Tickets
KUH?
CHECK IT OUT, OBI BOY I FOUND OUT EARS DON'T GROW BACK. THAT KINDA SUCKS

I'M TALKING LIKE ZERO OPPORTUNI-TIES! BUNCHA BULLSHIT, JUST OVER A PAIR OF EARS
THANKS TO THAT, IT TOOK ME FOREVER TO FINALLY FIND A JOB THAT WOULD TAKE A GUY WITH-OUT EARS..

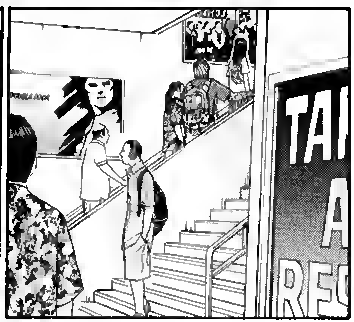

SO.. DO YOU WORK FOR A SHIPPING COMPANY OR SOME-THING?
HOW ABOUT YOU, YOU GETTIN' ONE?
FORTU-NATELY, THE PROB-LEM'S SETTLED MY WORK'S MAKIN' ME GET A DRIVER'S LICENSE NOW
NO.. NOT YET..


WELL, I GUESS THEY'RE GONNA HAVE ME BE A DRIVER FOR A WHILE...
SOMETIMES THEY HAVE ME CARRY THE BODIES 'N STUFF.

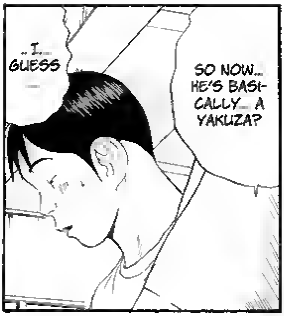
UMMM... YEAH.
FOR THE MOST PART I'M JUST BORED THOUGH, SO CALL IF YOU WANNA DO ANYTHING LATER

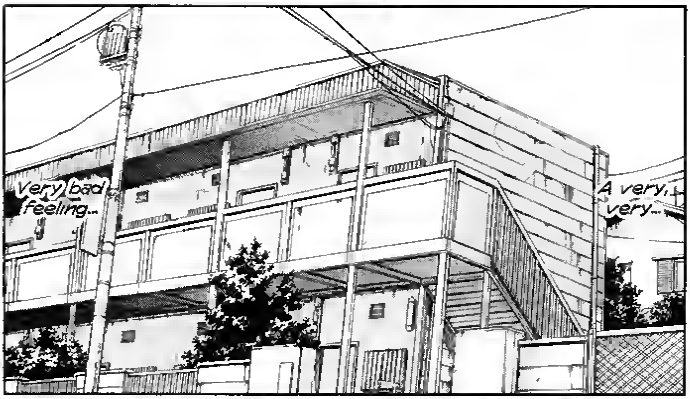
TAN!!!
ALL RIGHT, COM-INGGG

THE GUY WHO USED TO PICK ON YOU?
.IS.. IS THAT...

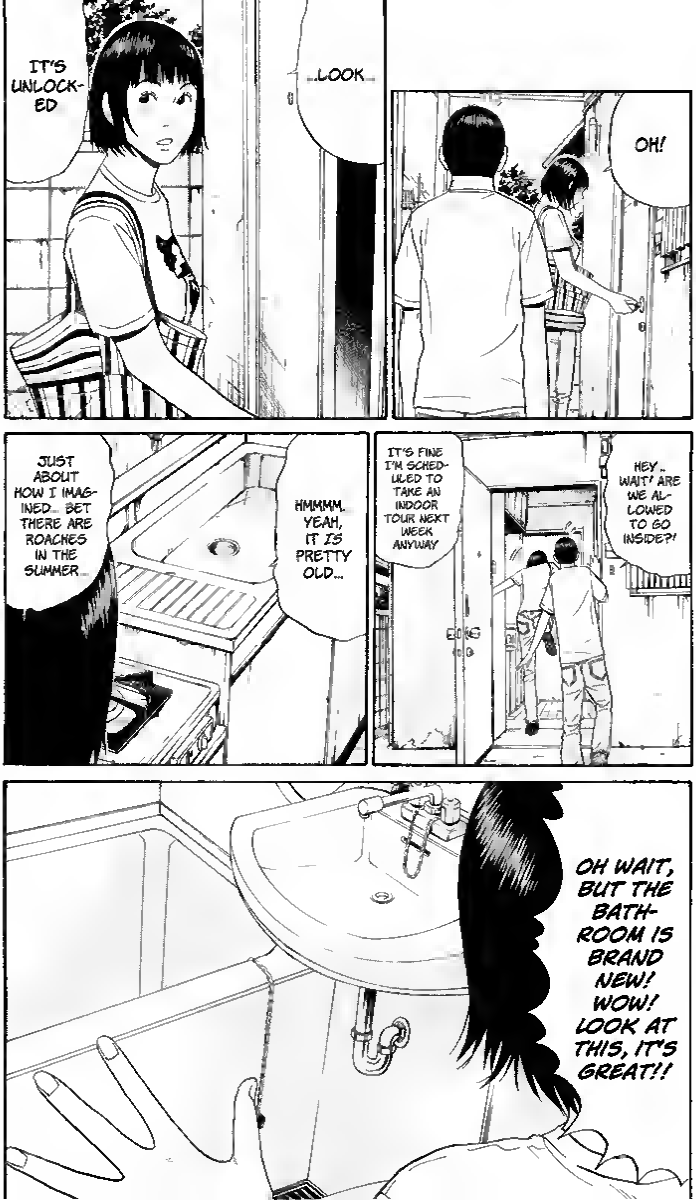


I have a bad feeling.

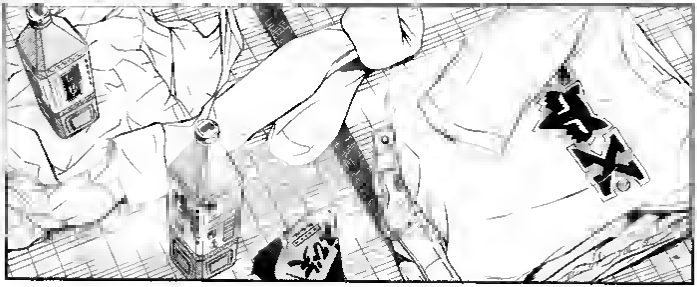

...I... GUESS
SO NOW... HE'S BASICALLY... A YAKUZA?


Very bad feeling...
A very, very...

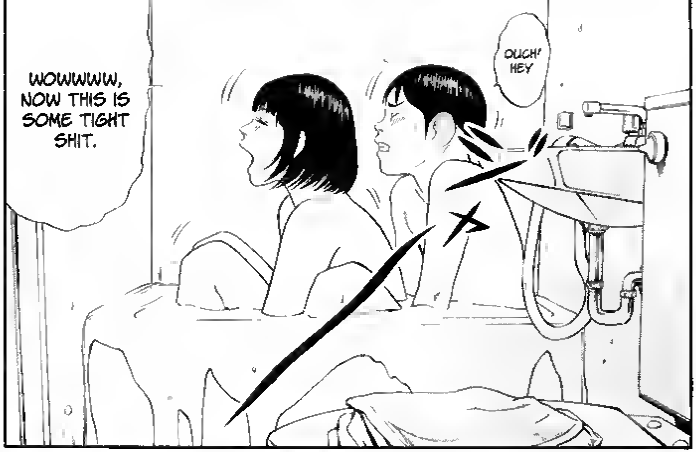
...and all I did was see him for 30 seconds...
AHA, THIS IS IT.
I'm having a hard time coming to grips with how depressed I feel right now...

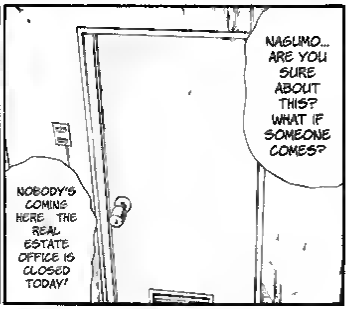

IT'S UNLOCKED
...LOOK...
OH!
JUST ABOUT HOW I IMAGINED... BET THERE ARE ROACHES IN THE SUMMER...
HMMMM. YEAH, IT IS PRETTY OLD...
IT'S FINE I'M SCHEDULED TO TAKE AN INDOOR TOUR NEXT WEEK ANYWAY
HEY.. WAIT! ARE WE ALLOWED TO GO INSIDE?!
OH WAIT, BUT THE BATHROOM IS BRAND NEW! WOW! LOOK AT THIS, IT'S GREAT!!

HEY, ISN'T THIS AWE-SOME, OR WHAT?! WHAT SHOULD WE DO, HUH?!
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? DO ABOUT WHAT ?
FSHAHA
CHECK THIS OUT, OGINO, C'MERE! WATER COMES OUT! EEEEK!
..NO KIDDING

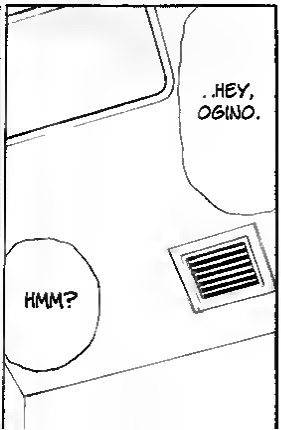


EX-SQUEEZE ME, SIR... PACK IN TIGHT, NOW.


WOWWWW, NOW THIS IS SOME TIGHT SHIT.
OUCH! HEY


NAGUMO... ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? WHAT IF SOMEONE COMES?
NOBODY'S COMING HERE THE REAL ESTATE OFFICE IS CLOSED TODAY!

ARE YOU BUMMED ABOUT SEEING THAT GUY TODAY?


.HEY, OGINO.
HMM?

LET'S THINK ABOUT FUN STUFF TO DO, OKAY?
WELL, CHEER UP... HE'S NOT YOUR PROBLEM ANY-MORE
...YEAH. I AM...
...SO ARE YOU REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT RENT-ING THIS PLACE?
YEAH... THANKS, NAGUMO...
I'M NOT SURE, YET... THIS IS JUST A CANDIDATE, PRIMARILY FOR ITS PRICE.
By law, at least ...
are of age to be married.
By Japanese law, Nagumo and I

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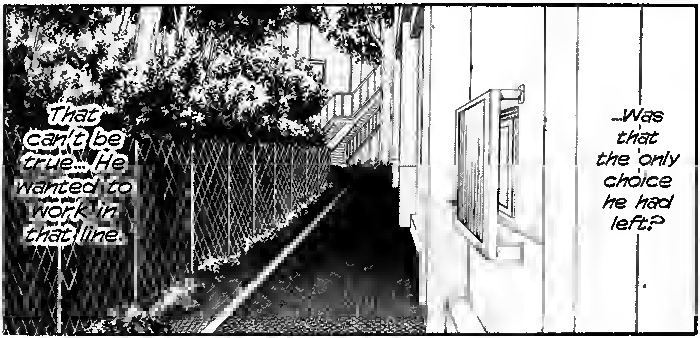
Chapter 54: Feel Like Studying

Taniwaki is a yakuza now.?


That can't be true... He wanted to work in that line.
...Was that the only choice he had left?

He's not stupid... He must get worried about his future sometimes...
What IS "happiness," to Taniwaki? To "get rich"?

There are some people in the world who cannot understand the emotions of others, and only receive pleasure from hurting them.
Some of them were simply born that way, regardless of how they grew up...
They look completely normal, but their standards for anger and their hierarchy of assigning importance is completely backwards from everyone else
Many people find that difference to be "dangerous"...
Tanniwaki's "normality" was clearly different from ours.
Everyone's different... Even in my class, the sexual kinks of all the guys were just a bit different...
女子校生
I consider my own taste to be squarely in the middle
Some people only get off on womens' ankles, some only like guys' asses...
Some probably only dig cows and sheep-- maybe even just pieces of metal

The kind that can't control their urges and act unthinkingly are the ones we call twisted, insane murderers
And the truly unlucky are those who are only attracted to sucking human blood or groping internal organs

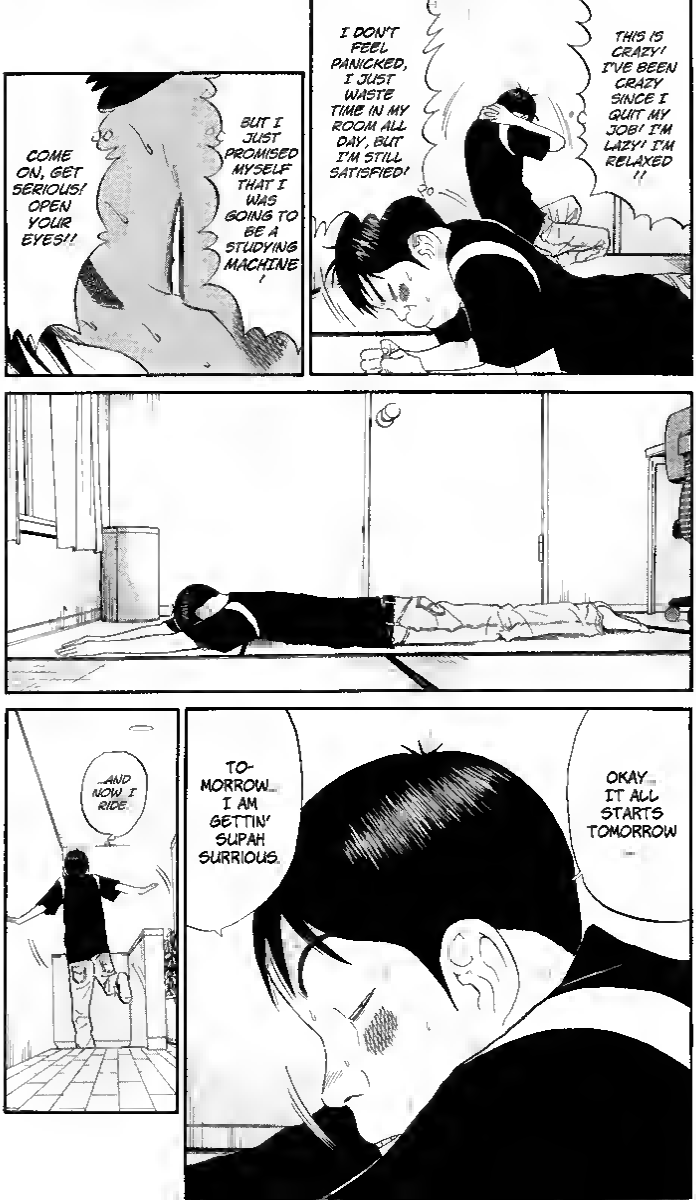
Not only that, but I get horny from seeing and touching normal stuff like tits and asses.
I'm lucky... I'm ridiculously lucky, because I came in first place, out of 1-4 hundred million sperm...

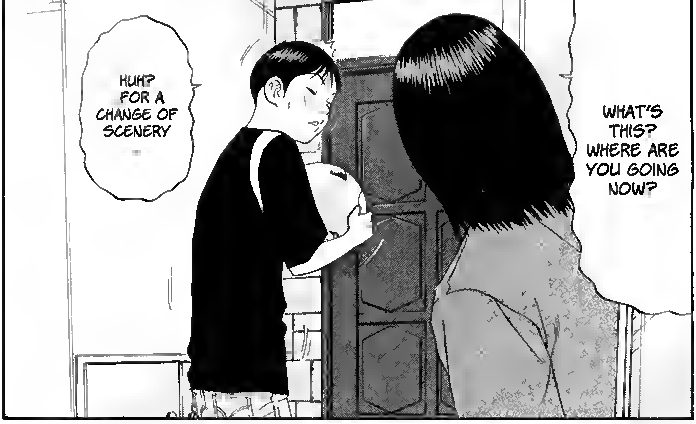
I love Nagumo's tits...

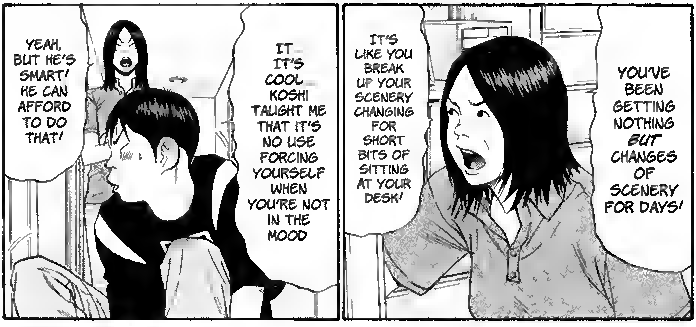
hmmmmm...

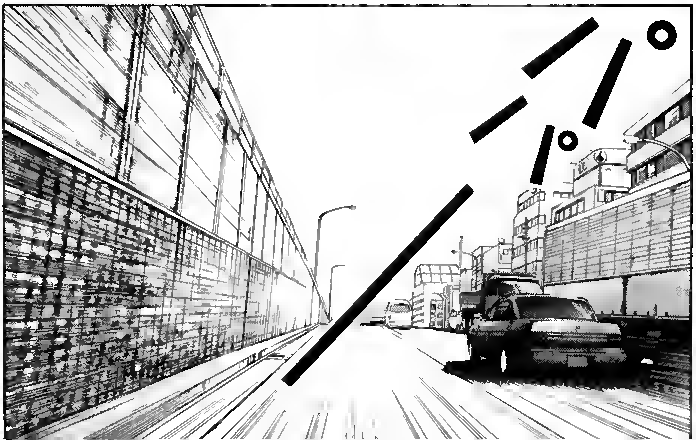
I love Nagumo's ass...
...
H-HELL NO, SHE'D BE SO PISSED.. SHE'D KILL ME.
HMM, LIKE HOW? HEY BABY, HAVE YOU EVER HAD... "THE PLEASURE"?
I HAVE NO IDEA... SHOULD I ASK?
ギリ
SPEAKING OF THIS I WONDER IF SHE'S EVER UH... CLIMAXED WHEN WE DO IT?
I JUST CAN'T...
SIGH- HHH... MAN, WHAT'S GOING ON...
FUCK, WHAT AM I TRYING TO SAY...?

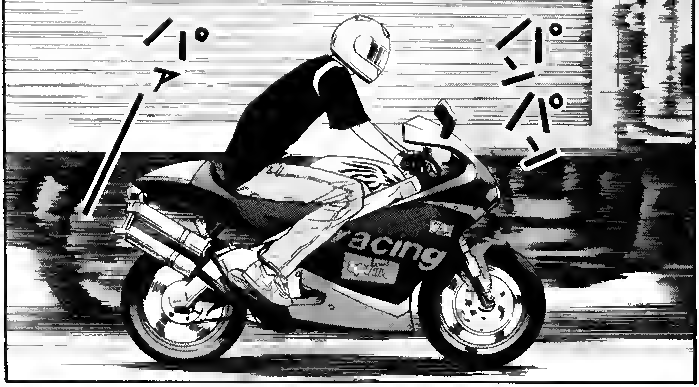
I DON'T FEEL LIKE STUDY-ING AT ALL!!!
UGGGGGH.
Why can't I get moti-vated?!
STUDY OR DIE!!!
What the hell is wrong with me?!
When I come back home, I don't even think about anything important.
I went to the bookstore, when I don't need a book.
I've cleaned my room three times.

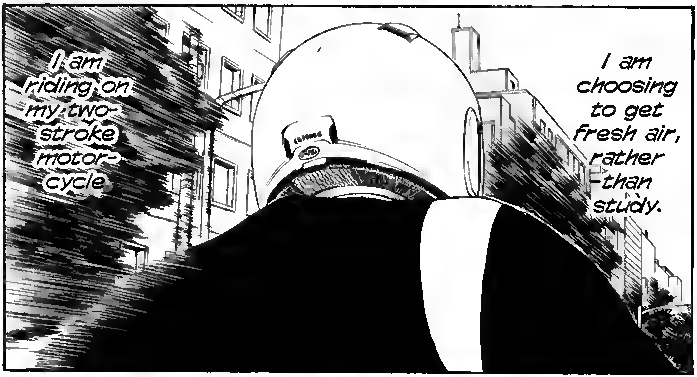

THIS IS CRAZY! I'VE BEEN CRAZY SINCE I QUIT MY JOB! I'M LAZY! I'M RELAXED !!
I DON'T FEEL PANICKED, I JUST WASTE TIME IN MY ROOM ALL DAY, BUT I'M STILL SATISFIED!
BUT I JUST PROMISED MYSELF THAT I WAS GOING TO BE A STUDYING MACHINE !
COME ON, GET SERIOUS! OPEN YOUR EYES!!
OKAY... IT ALL STARTS TOMORROW
TO-MORROW... I AM GETTIN' SUPAH SURRIOUS.
...AND NOW I RIDE.

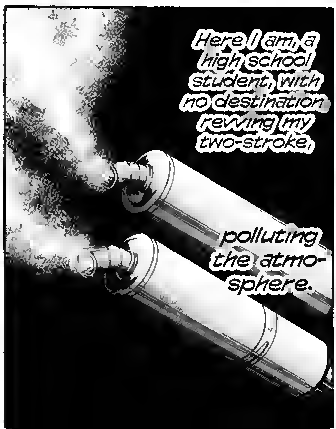

WHAT'S THIS? WHERE ARE YOU GOING NOW?
HUH? FOR A CHANGE OF SCENERY


YOU'VE BEEN GETTING NOTHING BUT CHANGES OF SCENERY FOR DAYS!
IT'S LIKE YOU BREAK UP YOUR SCENERY CHANGING FOR SHORT BITS OF SITTING AT YOUR DESK!
IT IT'S COOL KOSHI TAUGHT ME THAT IT'S NO USE FORCING YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN THE MOOD
YEAH, BUT HE'S SMART! HE CAN AFFORD TO DO THAT!




racing


I am riding on my two-stroke motor-cycle
I am choosing to get fresh air, rather than study.


Here I am, a high school student, with no destination revving my two-stroke,
polluting the atmo-sphere.

Even in the racing world, they have aban-doned two-strokes, for environmen-tal reasons

I'm like those people who are usually timid,
but turn into raging, reckless assholes on the internet
When I get on my bike,
And worst of all...
TUG
I HAVE TO FIGHT THE TRAFFIC!!
AAAA

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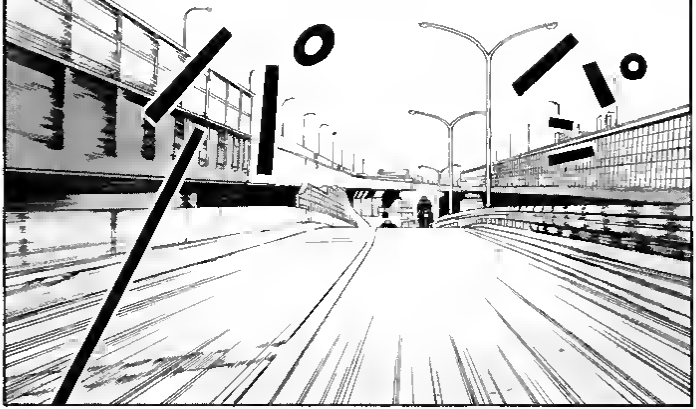
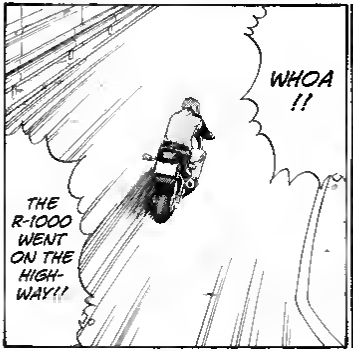
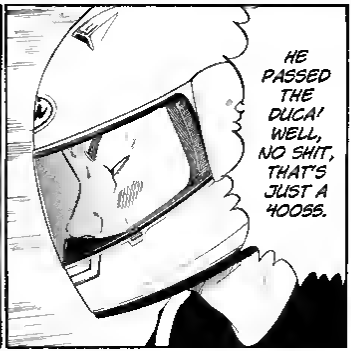
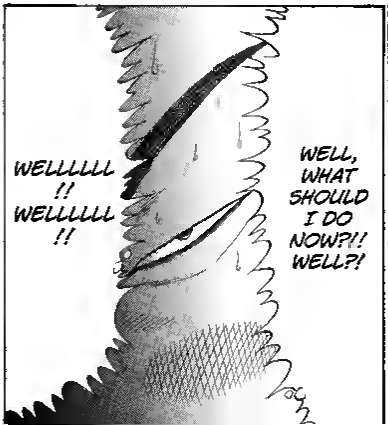
?
HUH? IS THERE A SPEED COP UP AHEAD?!
IS HE WAITING FOR ME TO COME PASS HIM, NOW?!
WHAT'S WITH THAT DUCATI? I LET HIM PASS ME, NO FUSS ...
GYUH-?!!
HEY !!
BAM!

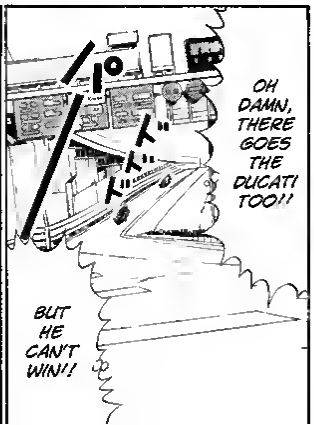
ACK!! AN OLD R-1000 !!
THIS DUDE IS RARING TO GO !!!
"Dammit, neither of them are gonna give me the time of day!!"
No way!
Are they friends?!
I'M FUCKIN' SURRIOUS !!
EVEN IF IT'S A SUPERSPORT AND A 1000CC, I STILL HAVE A CHANCE AS LONG AS WE'RE ON CITY STREETS, ASSHOLES!

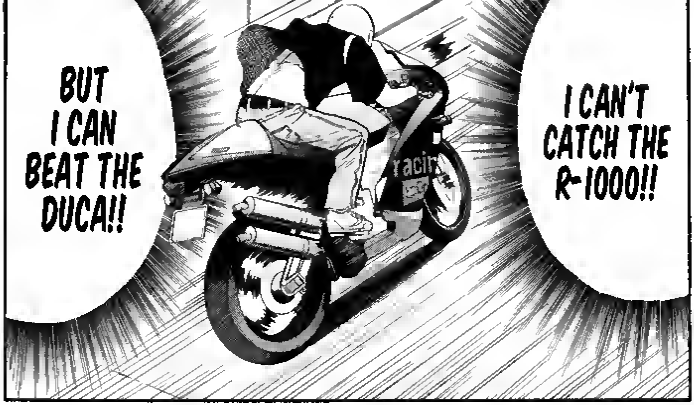


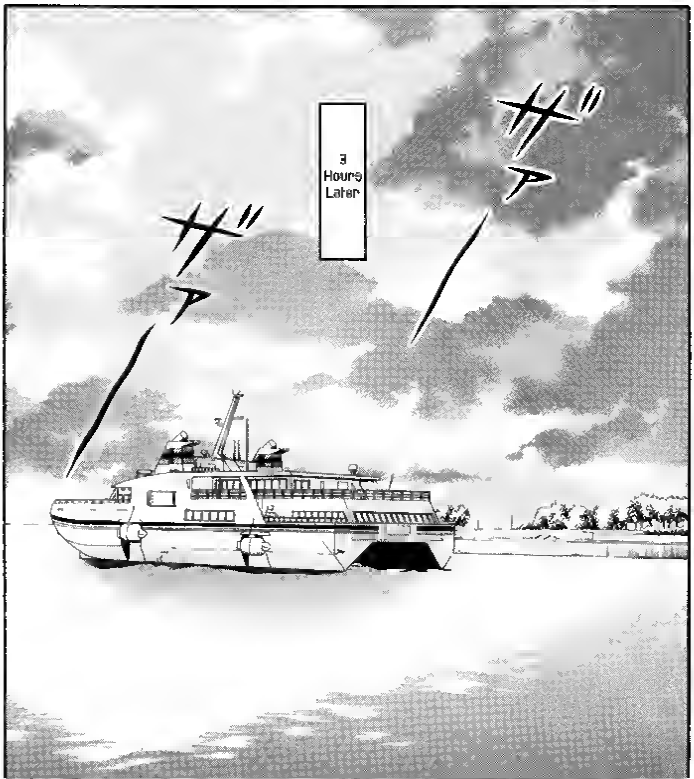

WHOA !!
THE R-1000 WENT ON THE HIGH-WAY!!


HE PASSED THE DUCA! WELL, NO SHIT, THAT'S JUST A 400SS.


WELLLLLL !! WELLLLLL !!
WELL, WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?!! WELL?!


OH DAMN, THERE GOES THE DUCA! TOO!!
BUT HE CAN'T WIN!!


I CAN'T CATCH THE R-1000!!
racing
BUT I CAN BEAT THE DUCA!!


3 Hours Later

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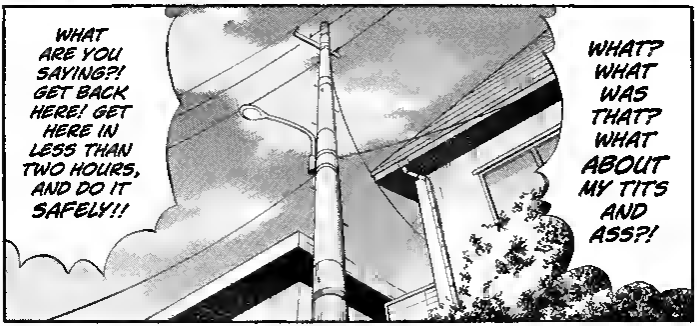
...
...I'M GOING TO DIE...

IF I KEEP RIDING LIKE THIS..
..I'M GOING TO DIE SOME-DAY.
I'M A SPEED FREAK... NOT EVEN NAGUMO KNOWS THIS..
I'M AN IDIOT I'M A MENACE TO SOCIETY ...
RRGH... RRRGH!! I LOST!! I TOTALLY LOST!!
WHY AM I SO PISSED?! WHY CAN'T I RELEASE THIS ENERGY INTO MY STUDYING?!!
OF COURSE I LOST, MY DIS-PLACE-MENT IS NOWHERE NEAR WHAT THOSE GUYS HAVE
I HAD TO REFUEL PARTWAY THROUGH! OF COURSE I LOST SIGHT OF THEM!!
FORGET IT!! TO-MORROW, I WILL STOP THESE MORONIC STRUG-GLES!! I WILL RETURN TO A GENTLE, CARING RIDER!
AND FORGET STARTING TOMOR-ROW! STARTING TOMOR-ROW, THERE WILL BE NO MORE "STARTING TOMOR-ROWS"!!

?!!
Ring ring-a-ring-ring
HELLO, IS THAT YOU, OGINO? WHY HAVEN'T YOU BEEN ANSWERING YOUR PHONE?!
WHERE ARE YOU?!
I'M AT THE PARK RIGHT NEXT YOUR HOUSE, BUSTER!

YOU'RE OUT RIDING?! YOU SKIPPED A STUDY DATE WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND TO VISIT SOME HOT SPRINGS ?!!
WHAT?! ATAMI?!! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING ALL THE WAY OUT THERE ?!!


WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! GET BACK HERE! GET HERE IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS, AND DO IT SAFELY!!
WHAT? WHAT WAS THAT? WHAT ABOUT MY TITS AND ASS?!

NO SHIT. I'M GIVING HER TWICE AS MUCH GRIEF AS LOVE!
I'M HAVING TROUBLE EXPRESSING MY LOVE TO HER.

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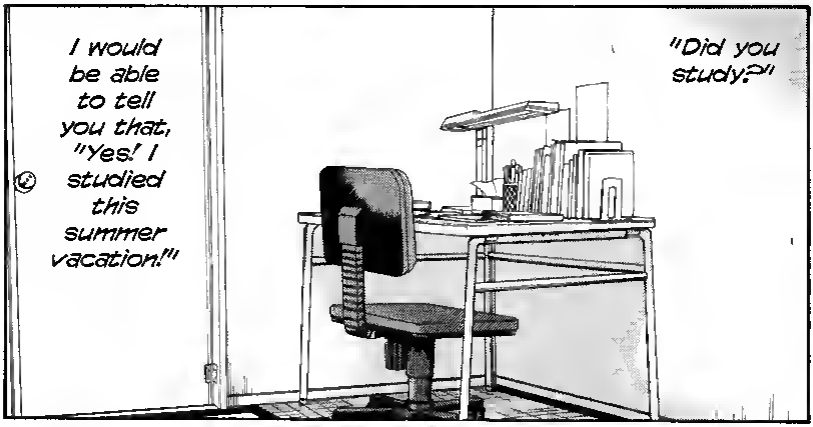
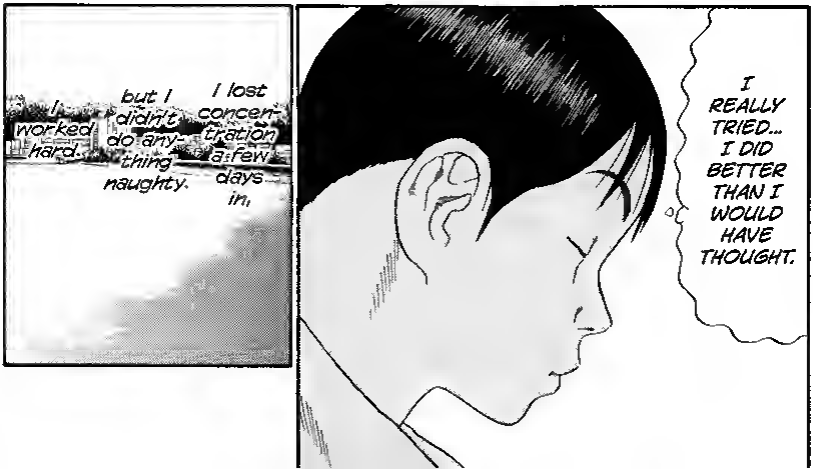
a //barbapapa
a.//pnyxtr
a.//flyingrobots
@://a filipino ninja secret agent

Chapter 55: Living Alone

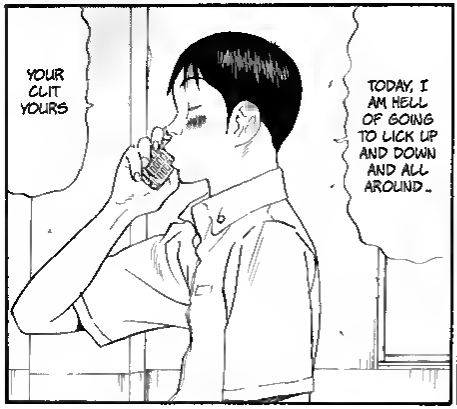
If you asked me,

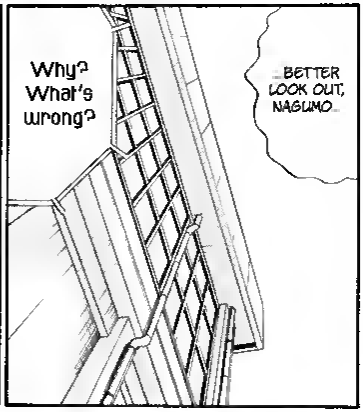

"Did you study?"
I would be able to tell you that, "Yes! I studied this summer vacation!"


I worked hard.
but I didn't do anything naughty.
I lost concentration a few days in,
I REALLY TRIED... I DID BETTER THAN I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT.

It's a newer place on top of a hill.
Nagumo finally rented her apartment.
I am going there today.
I will be there Saturday and Sunday... Our first sleepover.
She says she loves the apartment, but the location means she has to do some light mountain climbing every day.

IS GOING TO SPIT FIRE !!!
KA-BOOOM
Tonight... The bazooka that I forced into painful hibernation during the summer vacation...

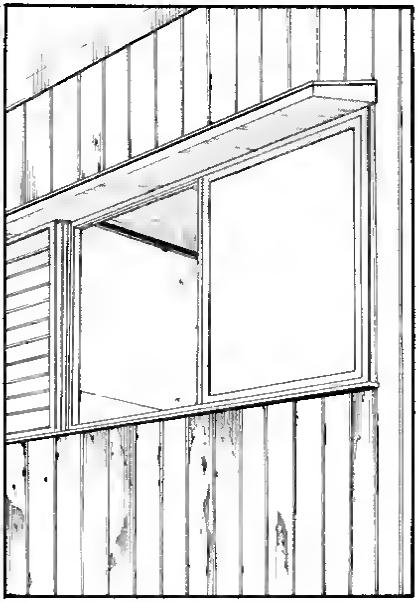

YOUR CLIT YOURS
TODAY, I AM HELL OF GOING TO LICK UP AND DOWN AND ALL AROUND..

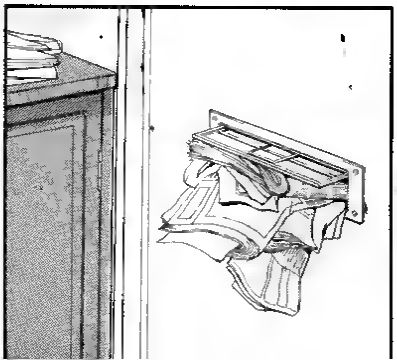

Why? What's wrong?
..BETTER LOOK OUT, NAGUMO..

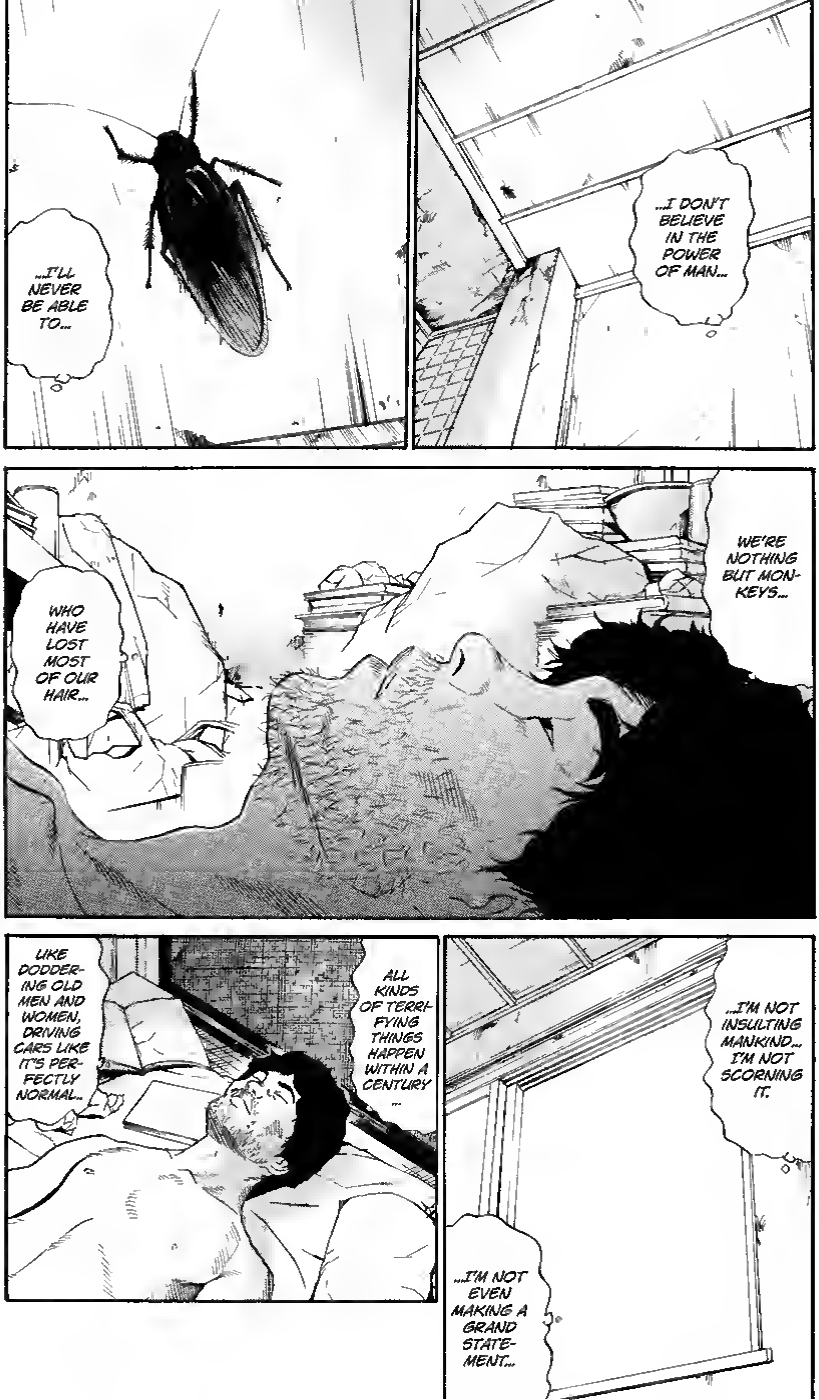
All right, I've had ENOUGH of these retarded phone-sex calls! Knock it off!
A TWO-DOZEN PACK
DON'T FORGET TO BUY CONDOMS

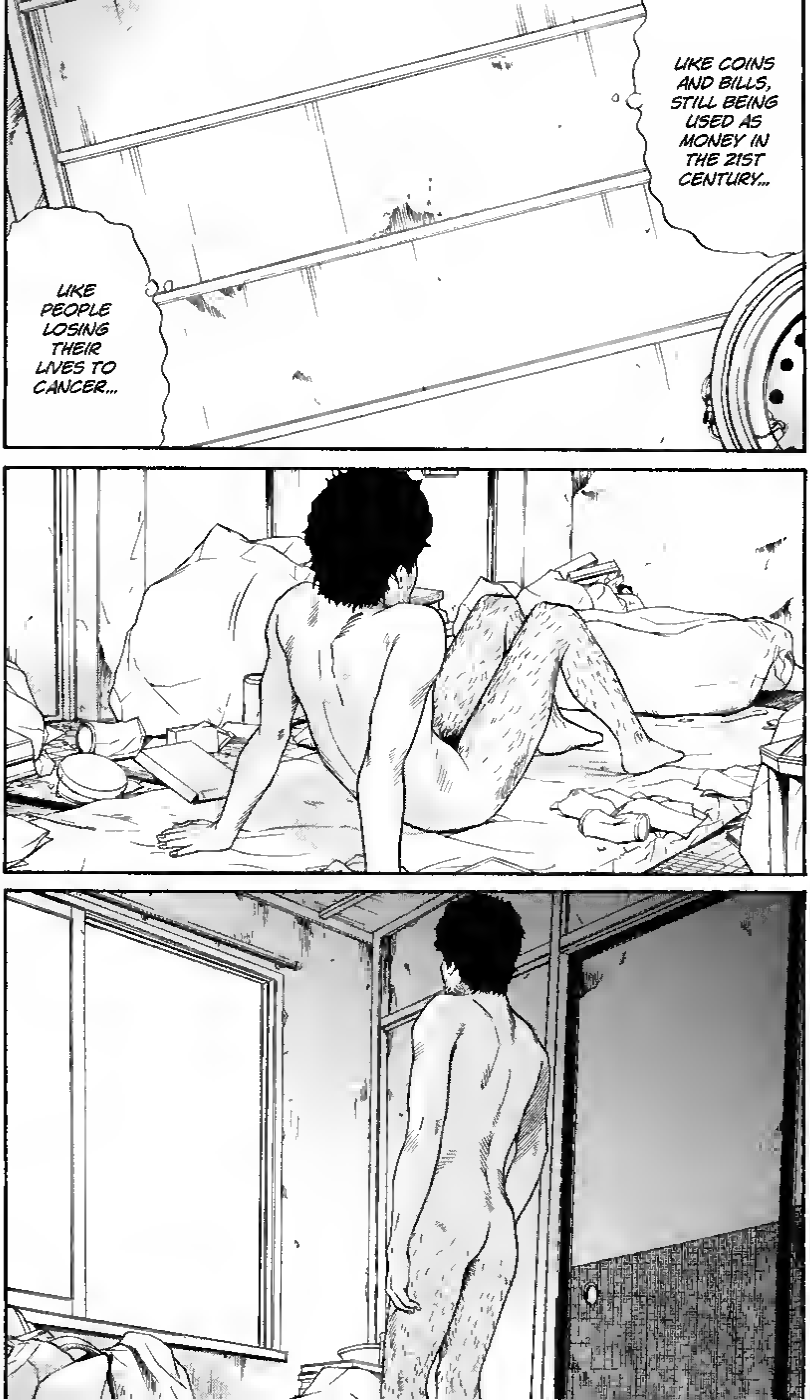
...okay
OKAY, ARE YOU DONE? JUST HANG UP AND DON'T CALL BACK UNTIL YOU'RE AT THE STATION!
FUK KUNONE

YAMANAKA
GOD. WHAT IS HE THINKING?
FLIP



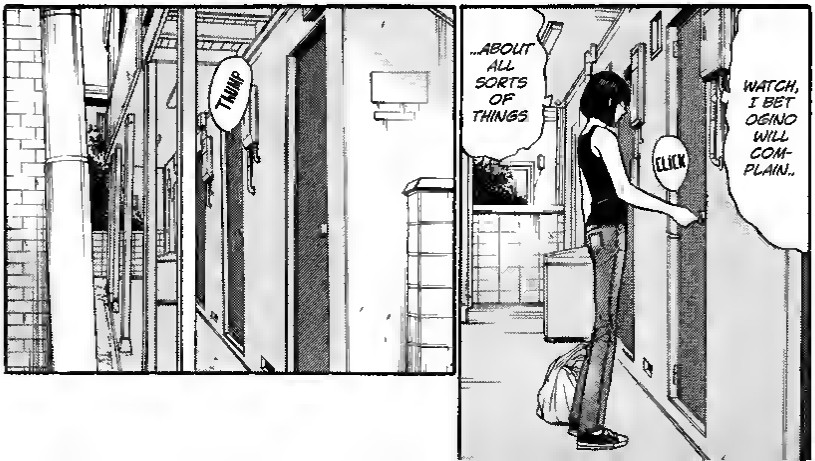



...I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO...
...I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF MAN...
WHO HAVE LOST MOST OF OUR HAIR...
WE'RE NOTHING BUT MONKEYS...
LIKE DODDERING OLD MEN AND WOMEN, DRIVING CARS LIKE IT'S PERFECTLY NORMAL...
ALL KINDS OF TERRIFYING THINGS HAPPEN WITHIN A CENTURY...
...I'M NOT EVEN MAKING A GRAND STATEMENT...
...I'M NOT INSULTING MANKIND... I'M NOT SCORNING IT.


LIKE COINS AND BILLS, STILL BEING USED AS MONEY IN THE 21ST CENTURY...
LIKE PEOPLE LOSING THEIR LIVES TO CANCER...

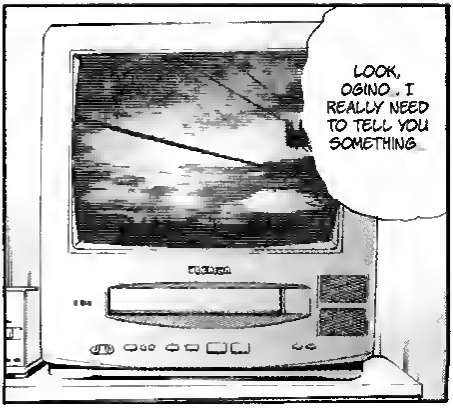
HEY GIRL.. SHOW ME YOUR PUSSY..
SHOW ME YOUR PUSSY.. AND I'LL LICK IT.
I'LL LICK IT UNTIL IT'S RAW AND BLOODY..

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT A BAG!
WHEW-WW! MAN THAT'S A CLIMB!
ドサ


THUMP
...ABOUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS
CLICK
WATCH, I BET OGINO WILL COM-PLAIN..

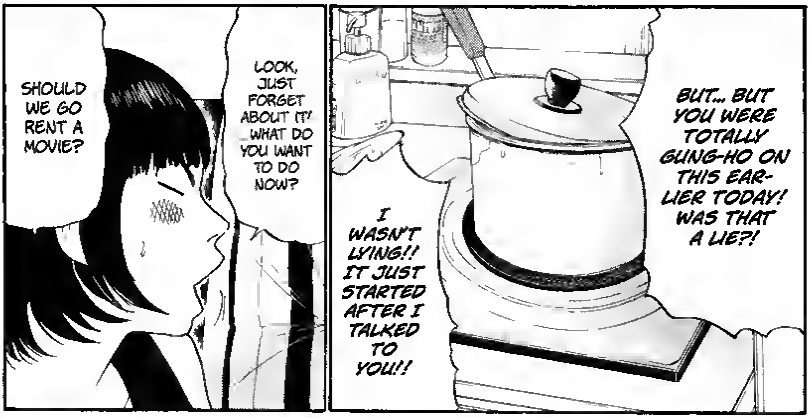
WILL THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF GOD FINALLY DISAPPEAR, IN 500 YEARS?
WILL WE HAVE MADE A PARADISE WITHOUT "MONEY"?

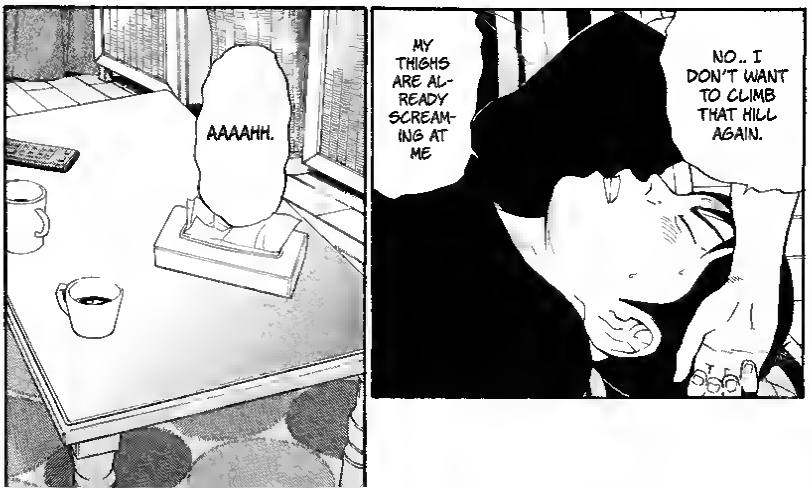
HUH? WHAT IS IT?


LOOK, OGINO, I REALLY NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING...

I JUST STARTED ON MY PERIOD... LIKE, TODAY...

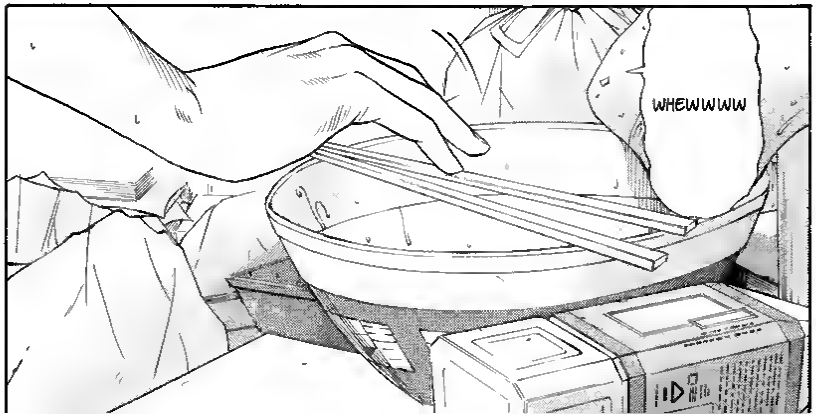
AAAAGH !!!
OH COME ON, DON'T GET SO BUMMED!! THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT!!


BUT... BUT YOU WERE TOTALLY GUNG-HO ON THIS EARLIER TODAY! WAS THAT A LIE?!
I WASN'T LYING!! IT JUST STARTED AFTER I TALKED TO YOU!!
LOOK, JUST FORGET ABOUT IT! WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NOW?
SHOULD WE GO RENT A MOVIE?


NO.. I DON'T WANT TO CLIMB THAT HILL AGAIN.
MY THIGHS ARE ALREADY SCREAMING AT ME
AAAAHH.

..SHE MUST BE A COLLEGE STUDENT ...

AND THAT LITTLE-BROTHER-LOOKIN' GUY..
IS HE SUPPOSED TO BE HER BOY-FRIEND?


WHEWWWW

SHLOP
...THAT WOULD BE EPICALLY LAME..

"RAPES NEARBY COLLEGE STUDENT, KILLS SELF."
"UNEMPLOYED 39-YEAR-OLD MAN."
"EXTRA, EXTRA! THE TRUTH BEHIND THE COWARDLY SUICIDE-RAPIST!"
"WAS HE AFRAID OF STOMACH CANCER?!"
THAT'S RIGHT FOLKS. HIS FAMILY HAS A HISTORY OF STOMACH CANCER. INCLUDING HIS FATHER—

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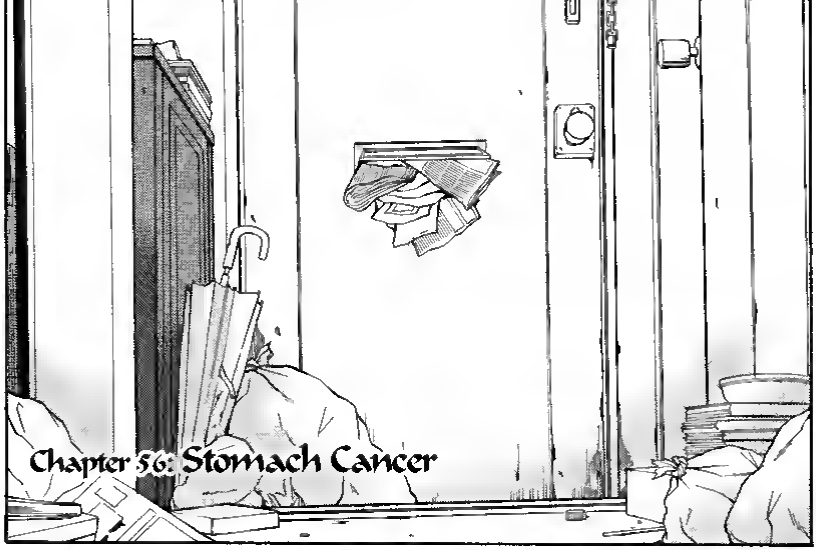
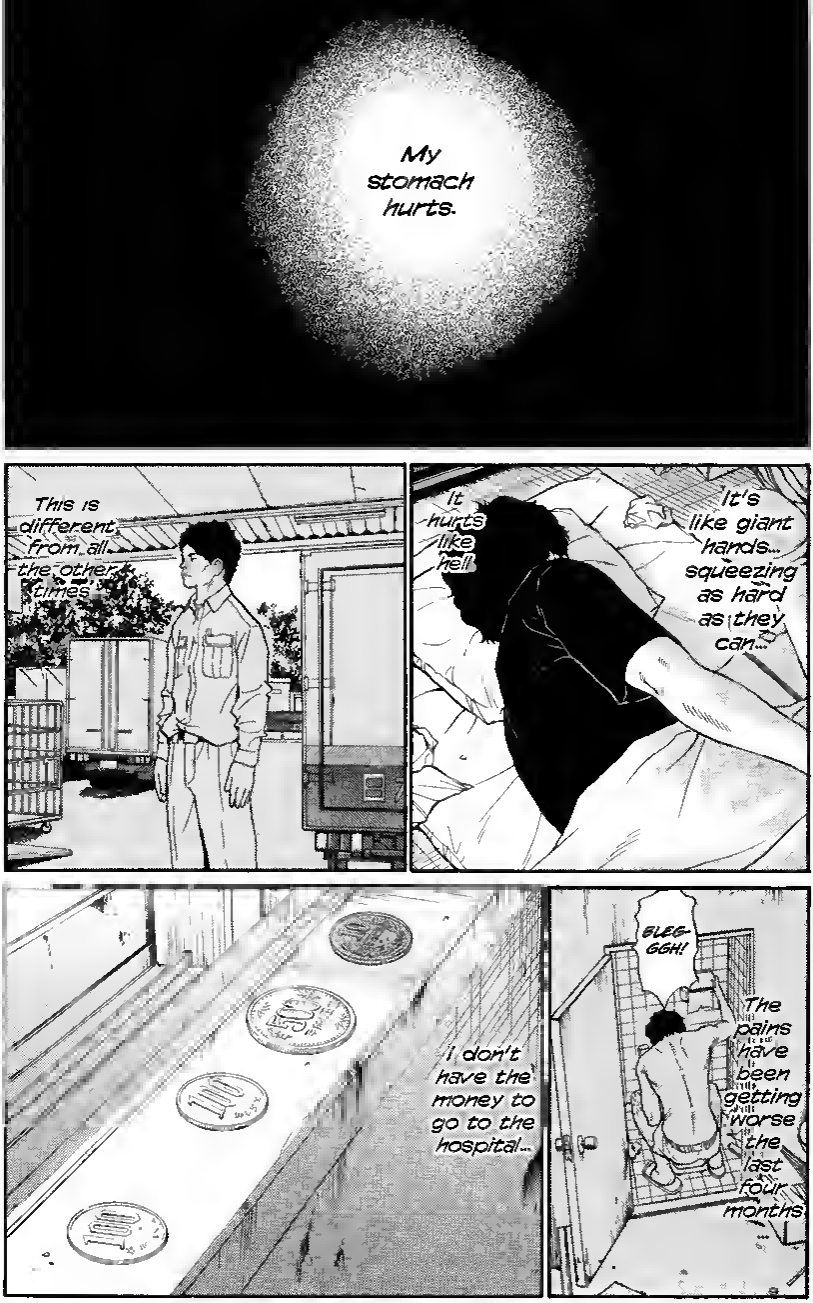
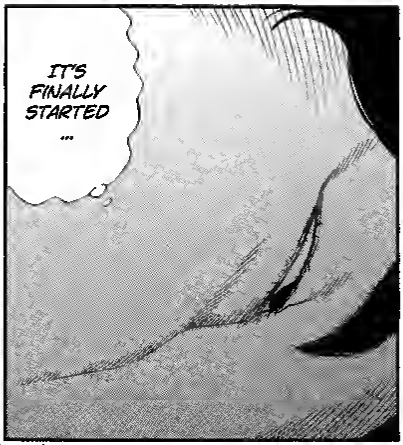
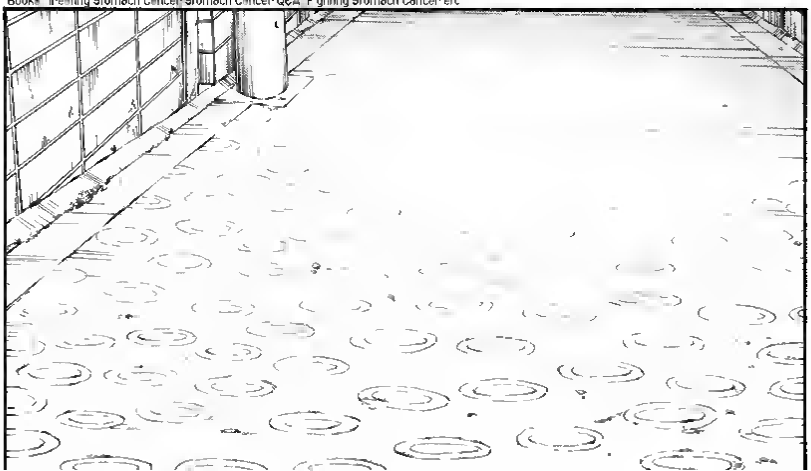

Chapter 56: Stomach Cancer

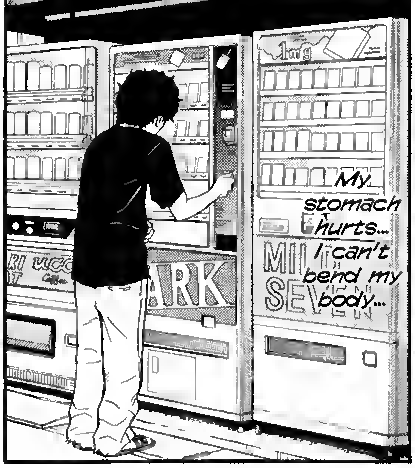
Aagh...

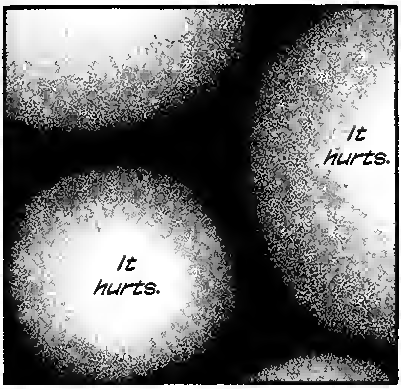

My stomach hurts.
This is different from all the other times
It hurts like hell
It's like giant hands... squeezing as hard as they can...
I don't have the money to go to the hospital...
GLEG-GGH!
The pains have been getting worse the last four months...



Books: Treating Stomach Cancer Stomach Cancer Q&A Fighting Stomach Cancer etc

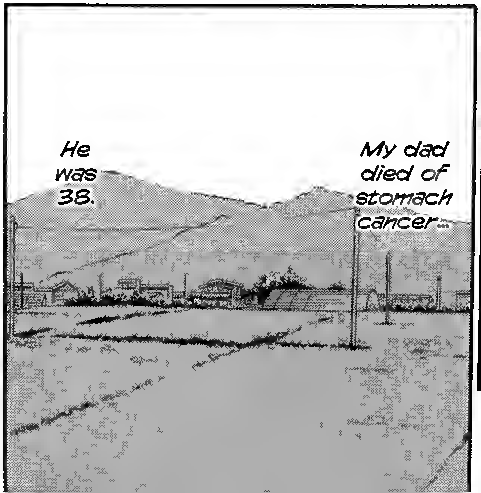


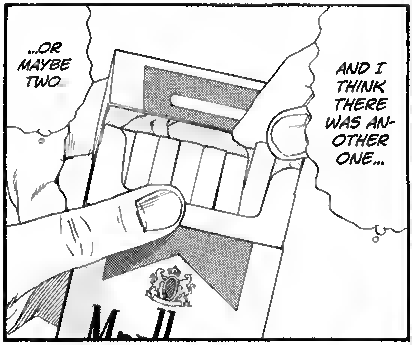

My stomach hurts... I can't bend my body...


It hurts.
It hurts.

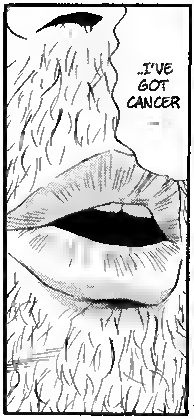
WHEWW-WWWW

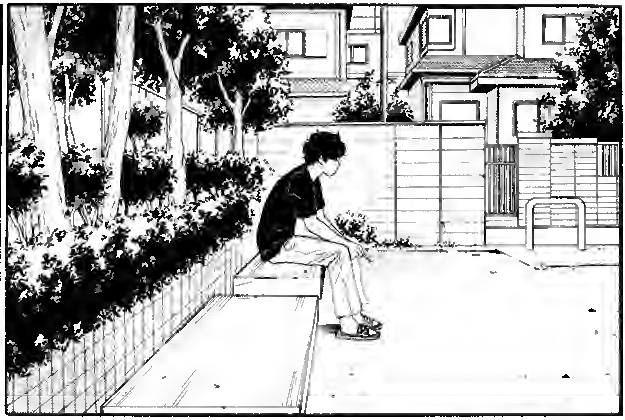
I can't walk fast...
I'm like an old man.


He was 38.
My dad died of stomach cancer...


...OR MAYBE TWO...
AND I THINK THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE...

He was 41.
His brother also died of the same thing, called scirrhous cancer...

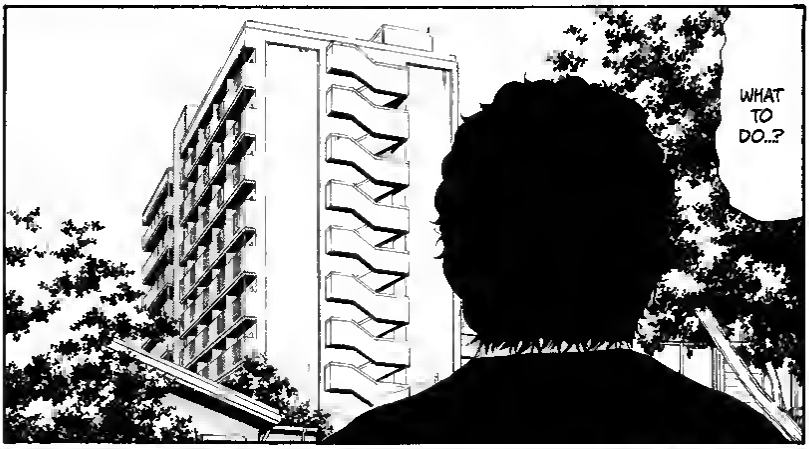

...I'VE GOT CANCER



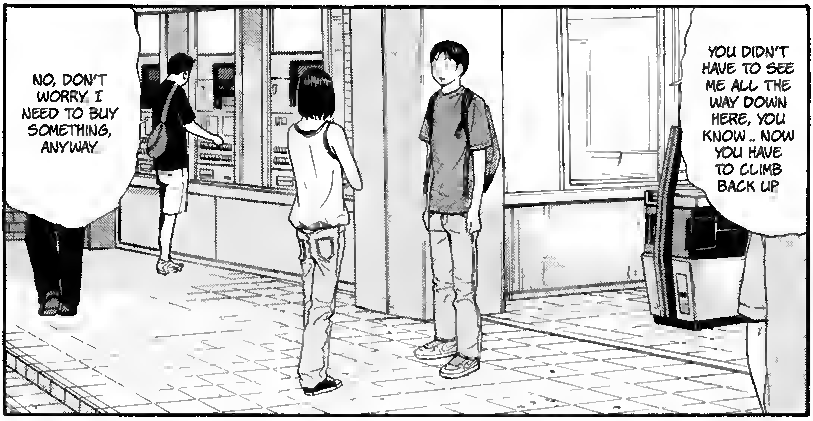
I survived one year past my dad...
Well, it's not too bad.

I WAS RIGHT, WHEN I WAS A KID... I WASN'T GOING TO SURVIVE PAST 40

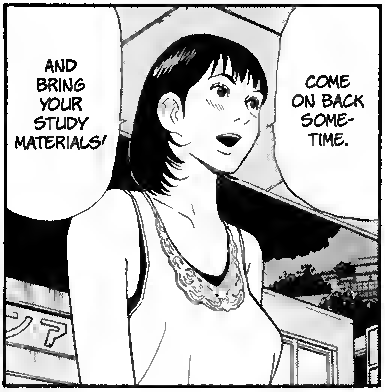
...SO...

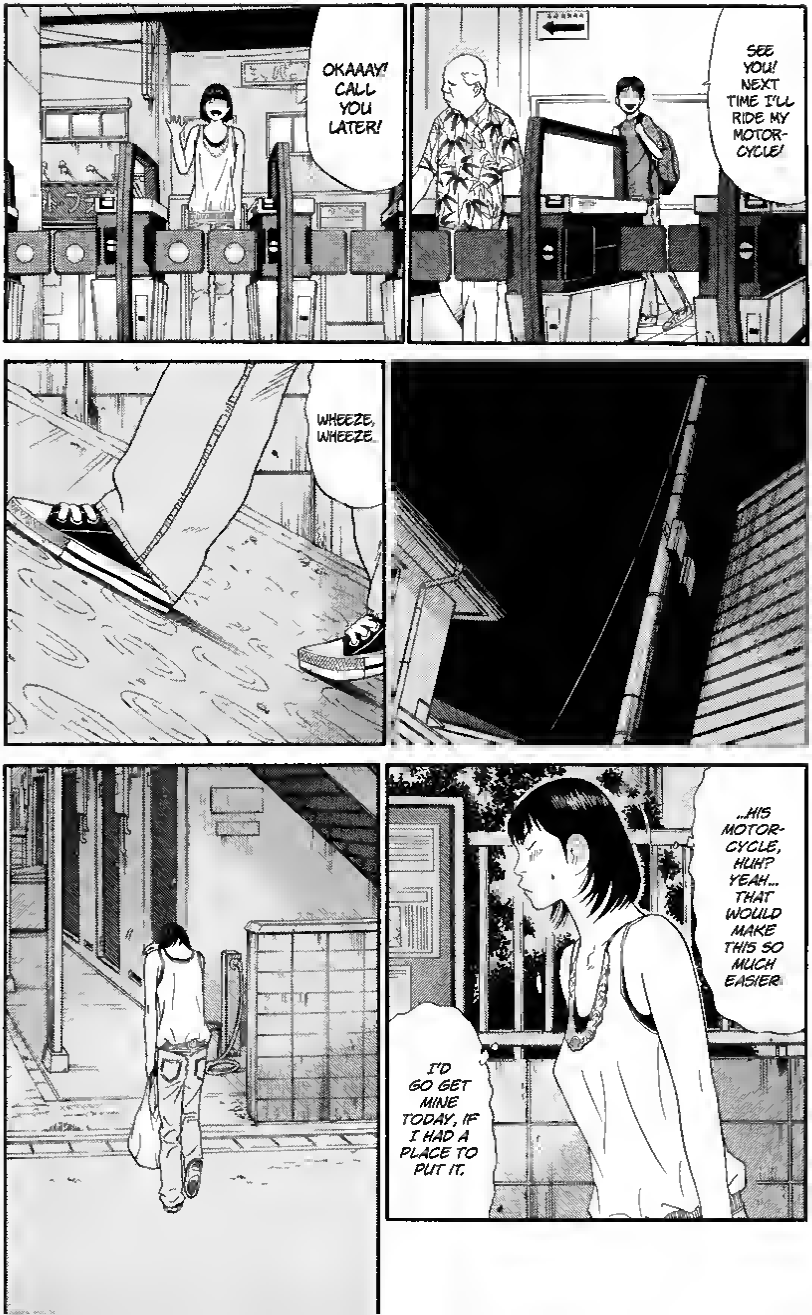

WHAT TO DO..?

NO KIDDING! IT HURTS YOUR TOES, DOESN'T IT?
MAN, GOING DOWNHILL IS DEADLY, TOO! I'M NOT READY FOR THIS


NO, DON'T WORRY. I NEED TO BUY SOMETHING, ANYWAY.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE ME ALL THE WAY DOWN HERE, YOU KNOW.. NOW YOU HAVE TO CLIMB BACK UP

I KNOW! GEEZ, KID!
LOCK THE DOOR WHEN YOU TAKE OUT THE TRASH
WATCH OUT FOR FIRES AND BURGLARS, NAGUMO


AND BRING YOUR STUDY MATERIALS!
COME ON BACK SOMETIME.


OKAAAY! CALL YOU LATER!
SEE YOU! NEXT TIME I'LL RIDE MY MOTOR-CYCLE!
WHEEZE, WHEEZE.
..HIS MOTOR-CYCLE, HUH? YEAH... THAT WOULD MAKE THIS SO MUCH EASIER.
I'D GO GET MINE TODAY, IF I HAD A PLACE TO PUT IT.

CLICK
WILL I EVER GET USED TO THIS?
WHEWWW FINALLY MADE IT
THUMP
UMMMMM.

...YES?

..WHAT IS IT?

...WHAT... TIME IS IT?

...I THINK... IT'S AROUND 8 O'CLOCK?
HUH?

UMMMMMM
I'M SORRY... BYE...
SLAM

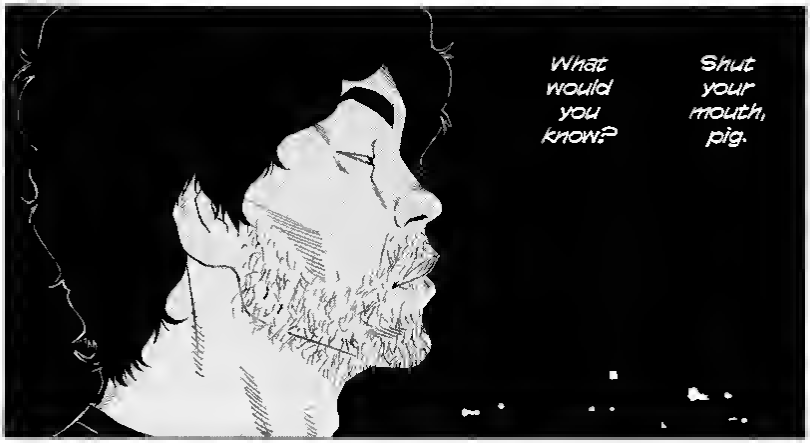
KCHUNK
CLICK

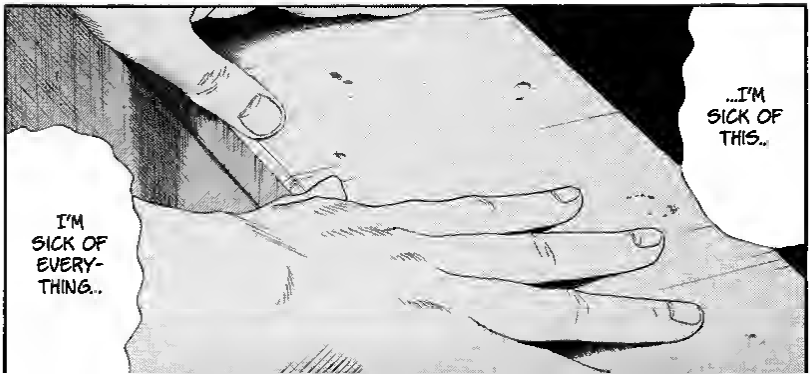
AAAAH, WHAT SHOULD I DO, OGINO?! I'M SO SCARED RIGHT NOW!
OH MY GOD, WHO WAS THAT?! A DRUNK?! SOMEONE WHO LIVES HERE?!

Such a mystery.

became something I desired.
over time,
How the disease I used to spend every day in fear of has,
Nothing but a little ulcer?
Could it just be gastroenteritis?
Fuck no... I've got cancer.

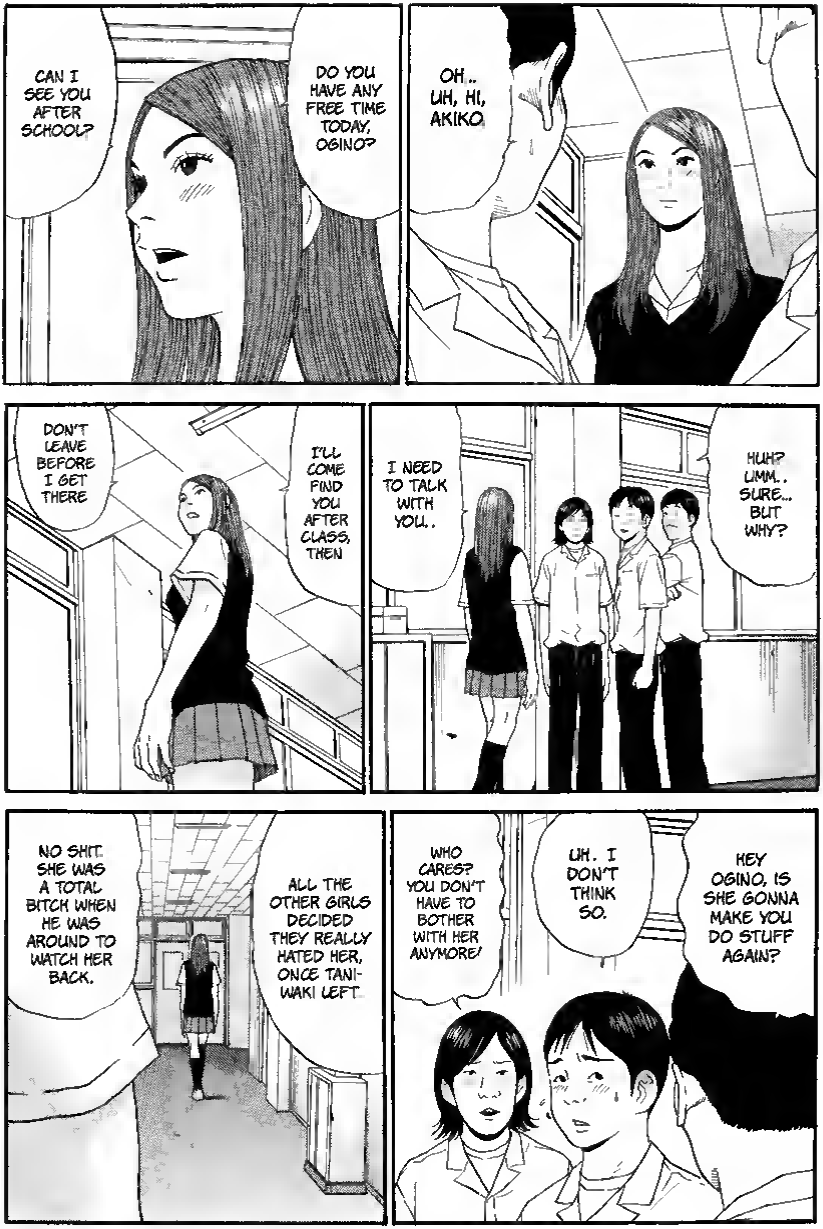
BASICALLY, THIS FRIEND OF YOURS IS WASTING HIS LIFE OVER A DISEASE HE DOESN'T KNOW HE'LL GET!
WAIT A MINUTE, ISN'T THAT LIKE ALL THOSE RE-TARDS WHO SOLD EVERY-THING THEY OWNED BE-CAUSE THEY BELIEVED NOSTRADAMUS' WHOLE "1999" PROPHECY?


What would you know?
Shut your mouth, pig.


...I'M SICK OF THIS..
I'M SICK OF EVERY-THING..

Especially
myself.

HEY, LISTEN UP, OGINO THIS GUY ACTUALLY SHIT HIS PANTS DURING THE LAST GYM PERIOD!
REALLY? DURING BASKET-BALL?
NO, I TOLD YOU! I DIDN'T!
WE WERE HAVING A FARTING COMPETITION, AND HE GOT LIKE, SO SERIOUS THAT HE WENT OVER THE LINE AND COMMITTED THE ULTIMATE FARTING FOUL!
GOD-DAMNIT, I'M SICK OF GOING OVER THIS WITH YOU! I DIDN'T GO "OVER THE LINE" !!
THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU SHOW ME YOUR UNDER-WEAR? WHY WERE YOU WALKING ALL STIFF?!
HA HA HA HA!
JESUS, I'M GETTING SICK OF THIS! SHUT UP!
TAP TAP


CAN I SEE YOU AFTER SCHOOL?
DO YOU HAVE ANY FREE TIME TODAY, OGINO?
OH.. UH, HI, AKIKO.
DON'T LEAVE BEFORE I GET THERE
I'LL COME FIND YOU AFTER CLASS, THEN
I NEED TO TALK WITH YOU..
HUH? UMM.. SURE.. BUT WHY?
NO SHIT. SHE WAS A TOTAL BITCH WHEN HE WAS AROUND TO WATCH HER BACK.
ALL THE OTHER GIRLS DECIDED THEY REALLY HATED HER, ONCE TANI-WAKI LEFT.
WHO CARES? YOU DON'T HAVE TO BOTHER WITH HER ANYMORE!
UH. I DON'T THINK SO.
HEY OGINO, IS SHE GONNA MAKE YOU DO STUFF AGAIN?

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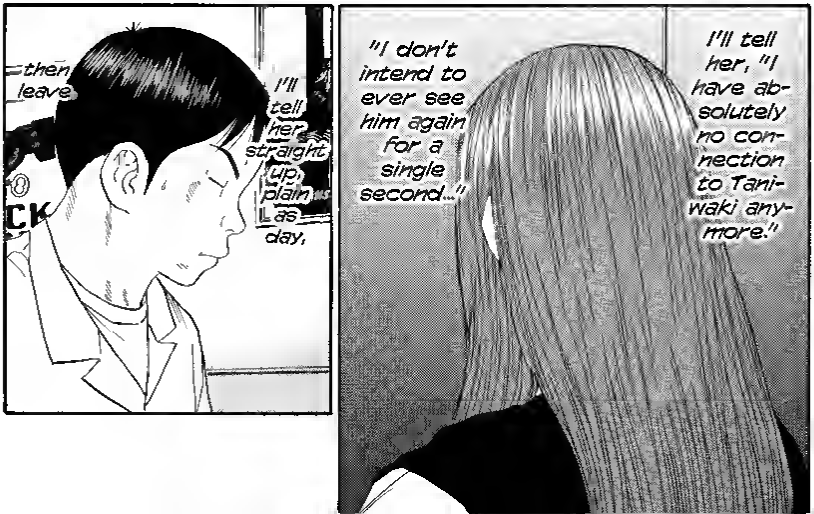
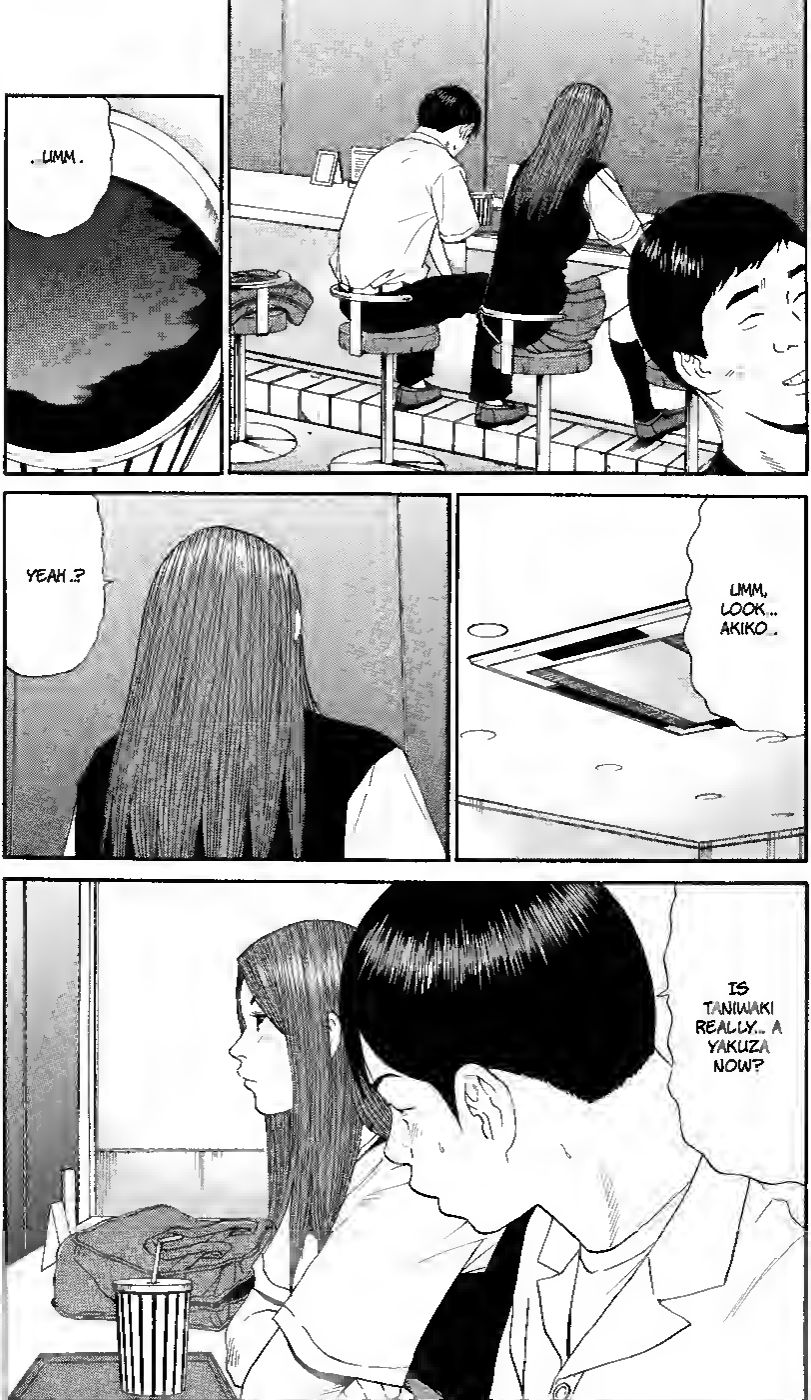
Chapter 57: River At Night

I know, 100%, that I don't want to hear this...
WAKERS
It's going to be bad...

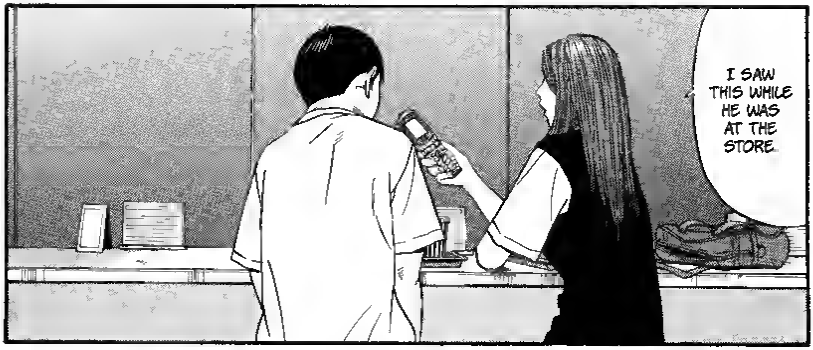
I need to make this clear once and for all.


"I don't intend to ever see him again for a single second..."
I'll tell her, "I have absolutely no connection to Taniwaki anymore."
I'll tell her straight up, plain as day,
then leave.

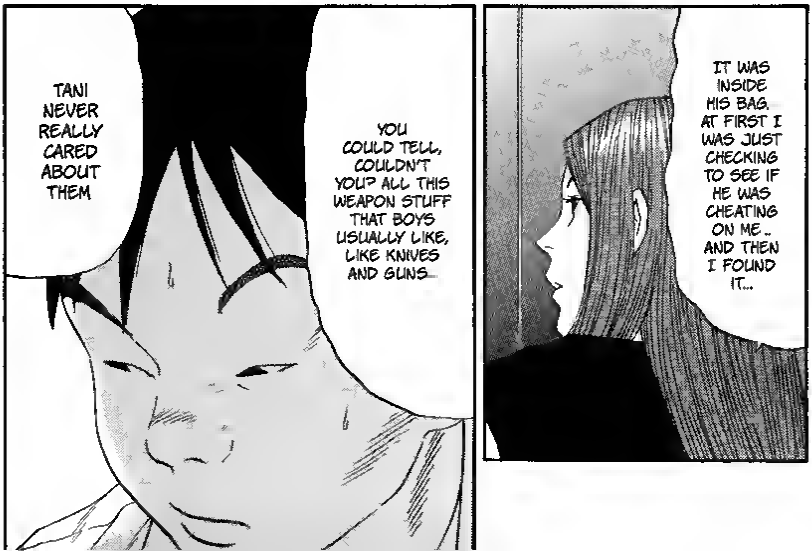

. UMM .
YEAH .?
UMM, LOOK.. AKIKO .
IS TANIWAKI REALLY.. A YAKUZA NOW?

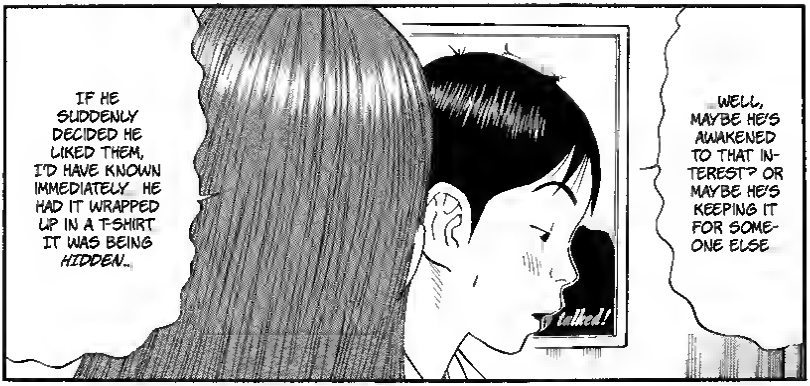
..I DON'T KNOW.. BUT HE COULD BE...
WHEN I ASK HIM ABOUT HIS JOB, HE AVOIDS ANSWERING...
HE SAID HE SAW YOU DURING SUMMER VACATION...
..YEP..
YESTERDAY... I WAS OVER AT HIS PLACE..
...UH-HUH...?
IT WAS ALL NORMAL AND EVERYTHING.. BUT ONCE NIGHT CAME, HE WAS SUDDENLY ALL LIKE, "WE HAVE TO BREAK UP"

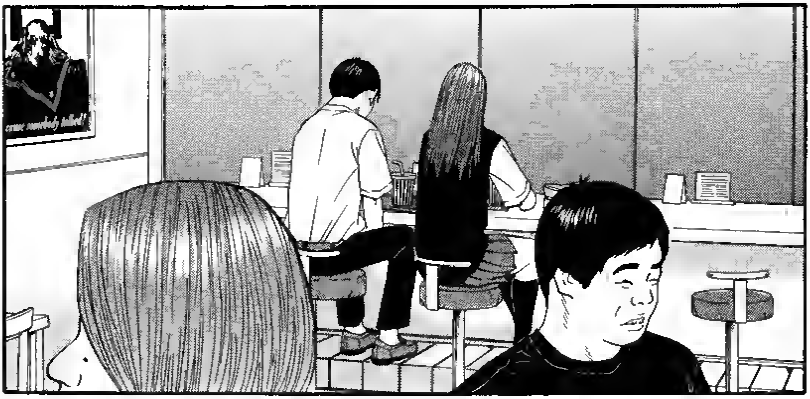
I TOLD HIM IT WAS ABSO-LUTELY OUT OF THE QUESTION
...
I COULDN'T ACCEPT IT AT ALL, SO I TOLD HIM NO..
I MEAN.. IT WAS SO UNNATURAL... WHEN I ASKED HIM WHY, NONE OF HIS AN-SWERS MADE ANY SENSE..
NO— LOOK AT THIS.
...AND DID HIS ANSWERS INVOLVE ASKING ME WHY?


I SAW THIS WHILE HE WAS AT THE STORE.

au
...A GUN?
WHAT'S THAT?


IT WAS INSIDE HIS BAG. AT FIRST I WAS JUST CHECKING TO SEE IF HE WAS CHEATING ON ME... AND THEN I FOUND IT...
YOU COULD TELL, COULDN'T YOU? ALL THIS WEAPON STUFF THAT BOYS USUALLY LIKE, LIKE KNIVES AND GUNS...
TANI NEVER REALLY CARED ABOUT THEM


IF HE SUDDENLY DECIDED HE LIKED THEM, I'D HAVE KNOWN IMMEDIATELY. HE HAD IT WRAPPED UP IN A T-SHIRT IT WAS BEING HIDDEN...
...WELL, MAYBE HE'S AWAKENED TO THAT INTEREST? OR MAYBE HE'S KEEPING IT FOR SOMEONE ELSE
I talked!



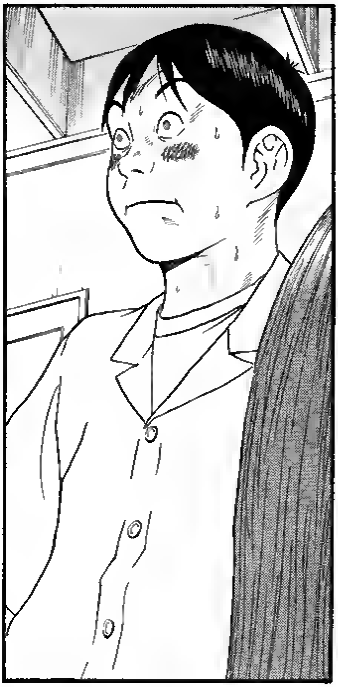
Note: In Japan, civilians are not allowed to own handguns

THAT'S WHY HE STARTED TALKING ABOUT BREAKING UP...
AND I THINK SOMETHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE...
HUH... WHAT ?!
I THREW IT IN THE RIVER.
I, I DON'T THINK.. Y'KNOW, YOU MIGHT JUST BE OVERANALYZING THIS.
DOES HE KNOW ?!
A-ARE YOU SERIOUS?! BUT... WHAT ABOUT TANIWAKI?!
I THREW IT IN THE RIVER YESTERDAY...
I GOT SO SCARED...

N-NO !!
PLEASE, OGINO WILL YOU STAY WITH ME? I CAN ONLY ASK THIS OF YOU..
WELL.. I'M GOING TO MEET HIM RIGHT NOW, BECAUSE WE NEED TO TALK..
WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE MOST INSANE BULLSHIT EVER?! I CAN'T TAKE IT! NO MORE !!
I MADE UP MY MIND! I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH TANIWAKI ANYMORE !!
!!!
HEY, WHAT'S ALL THE FUSSIN' ABOUT?

WHAT'S OGI BOY DOING HERE?

I HAVE AN IMPORTANT DISCUSSION TO HAVE WITH AKIKO.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? GO ON, GET.



ABOUT WHAT WAS IN YOUR BAG, RIGHT?

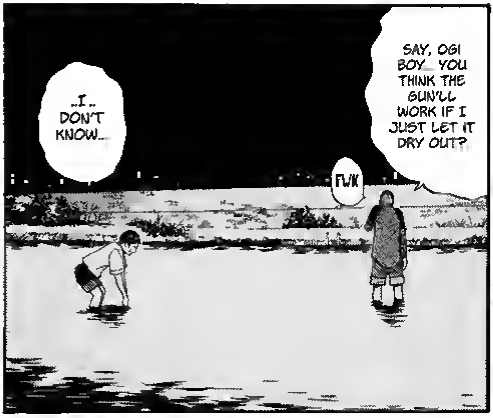
I CAN'T... I GOT RID OF IT.
I THREW IT IN THE RIVER.
SO IT WAS YOU... WHY'D YOU DO THAT? GIVE IT BACK.
SERI-OUS-LY?!!
YOU WHAT ?!!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU WANT TO LOOK FOR IT?!
TO WHERE YOU THREW IT AWAY, YOU STUPID BITCH!!
GO? GO WHERE?
WHAT THE FUCK?! WE GOTTA GO!!
THE TAMA RIVER
WHERE?! WHICH RIVER?!
KERY'

YES, RIGHT OVER THERE
IT IS ON THIS SIDE, AIN'T IT?
HEY, AKI! SPEAK TO ME, HERE!
WHEWWW ... FUCK!
I THREW IT AS HARD AS I COULD FROM THAT SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.
UMM... OKAY...
OGI BOY. LET'S GO FURTHER DOWN-STREAM! GOTTA START DOWN THERE!

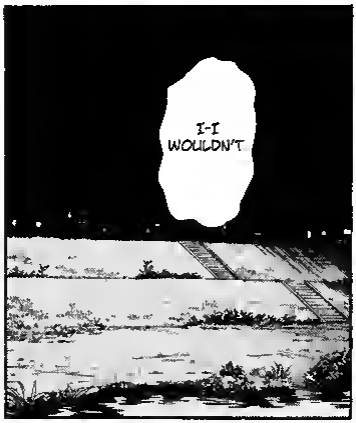
SLIP
SHIT... WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING? I SAID I WASN'T PUTTING UP WITH THIS
MY ASS IS TOTALLY SOAKED.. IF IT GETS INTO MY CELL-PHONE...
HEY, YOU FIND SOME-THING ?
HUH?!
AAAAGH !!!
WHOA, IT'S DEEP HERE!
GOD-DAMNIT! THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE! THE NUDE PICS OF NAGUMO ...
UH-OHHHH. REST IN PEACE, MR CELLY-CELL!
I... DROPPED MY CELL...

GOD, YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME. I CAN'T SEE SHIT...
SPLORF
I'M GONNA BE HONEST
THIS IS NEVER GONNA WORK
MMM?
IT'S JUST IMPOS-SIBLE, ESPE-CIALLY AT NIGHT ...
I THINK IT'S MORE LIKELY TO PAY OFF IF YOU CHECK TOMOR-ROW IN THE DAY ..
...BUT I NEED IT TOMOR-ROW..
I GOTTA GET IT BACK TODAY.
SPSSH
.. SO... IS, UM... IS THAT GUN... REAL?
IT'S REAL

I HAVE TO USE IT TOMORROW TO SHOOT A GUY WHO LIVES IN YOKOHAMA.
...AND DON'T TELL AKIKO. SHE'LL CRY HER EYES OUT...

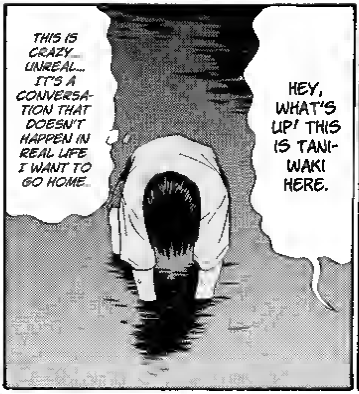

SAY, OGI BOY... YOU THINK THE GUN'LL WORK IF I JUST LET IT DRY OUT?
FWK
...I... DON'T KNOW...

WHEW-WWW
OWW, MAN...


I-I WOULDN'T

YEAH, I'M THINK(N)' I'M JUST PLAIN FUCKED, HERE...
MAYBE I SHOULD FESS UP

...I MEAN... DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO YOUR PLACE?
PLUS, AKIKO WOULD BE PRETTY TORN UP ABOUT THE WHOLE THING... I THINK THEY'RE JUST USING YOU, MAN...

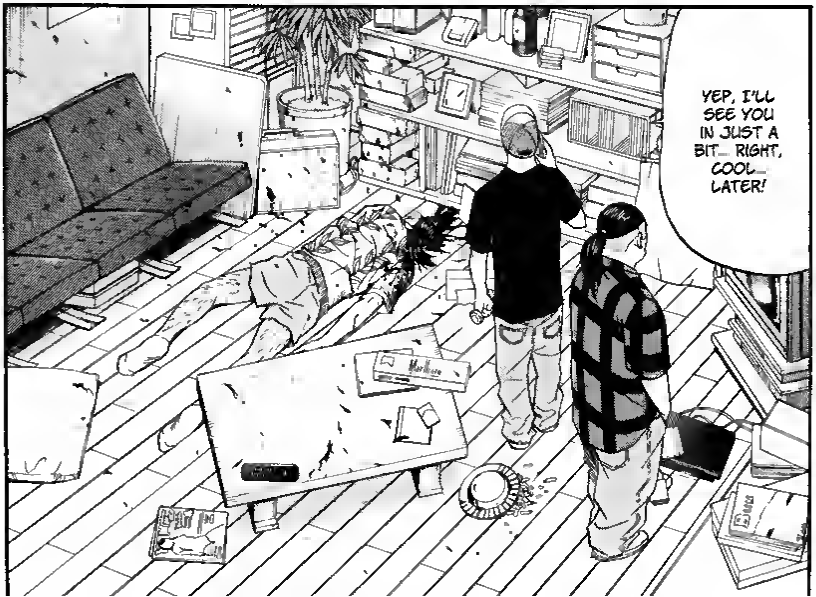

HEY, WHAT'S UP! THIS IS TANI-WAKI HERE.
THIS IS CRAZY... UNREAL... IT'S A CONVERSATION THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN IN REAL LIFE I WANT TO GO HOME...

...ARE YOU JUST MAKING THIS UP? YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
LOOK, THIS DUDE IS A BAD, BAD MAN, EVEN IN THE EYES OF THE COUNTRY.

HUH.? WHO ARE YOU? REALLY? SO MR. KURODA AIN'T THERE?
UHH. I JUST HAD TO TALK TO HIM, WAS ABOUT TO JET ON OVER. WHEN'D HE SAY HE'D BE BACK?

NO, I'LL COME PICK YOU UP. HE LEFT HIS CAR HERE
WHERE ARE YOU AT NOW? ...TAMA RIVER? AHHH, YEAH, GOT IT!

NAH, NAH, IT'S COOL! I GOT NOTHIN' TO DO.. YEAH
SURE THING!


YEP, I'LL SEE YOU IN JUST A BIT... RIGHT, COOL... LATER!

CIGUATERA

vol.5 end

to be continued vol.6

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